



Library of



Ministry

of the Interior

Purchased from
The Harford Fund

No 61583

Date Due

Nov. 25			
---------	--	--	--

APR 24 1977		
-------------	--	--

[illegible]



Evandrie.

EDVARD GRIEG

BY H. T. FINCK



LONDON : JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD
NEW YORK : JOHN LANE COMPANY. MCMVI

9675 19

61583

ML

410

.G9

F4

1906

Printed by BALLANTYNE & Co., LIMITED
Tavistock Street, London

TO
EDWARD MACDOWELL

AMERICA'S MOST ORIGINAL

COMPOSER

WHO HAS BEEN MORE INFLUENCED BY EDVARD GRIEG

THAN BY ANY OTHER MASTER



PREFACE

SURELY no apology is needed for the appearance of this volume. The number of Grieg's admirers is legion, yet up to the present time there has been no book in English (or even in German) to which they could go for information regarding his life, his personality, and his works. The French have been somewhat more fortunate, for they have had, since 1892, Closson's excellent brochure; even that, however, has only forty pages about Grieg, with a few paragraphs on his life. Schjelderup's "Edvard Grieg og hans Vaerker" (1903) exists, so far, only in Norwegian. It devotes much less space to the composer's life than to his works, of which it contains some admirable analyses. Grieg himself, although a keen and entertaining writer, has told the public very little about himself and his works. Brilliant offers for an autobiography have been made him, but, partly from disinclination, partly because of persistent ill-health, he has not accepted them. Letters he has written in abundance; one of his friends, Mr. Feddersen, has over a hundred of them; but almost the only ones of his letters which have been made public are the few included in this volume.

Under these circumstances, and in view of the fact that Grieg has led a secluded life in the Far North, it is perhaps not surprising that no elaborate biography has heretofore been attempted. I myself was under the impression, when Mr. Lane first asked me to write this monograph, that it would be a little difficult to find the material for it. But

I soon discovered my mistake, and before I reached the middle of my MS. I had to implore him to allow me 10,000 words more than the 20,000 first asked for, being loth to leave the good things I had found to my successors. As for the rest, the following pages must speak for themselves. An attempt is made therein to assign to Grieg the rank which the author is absolutely convinced future generations will give him; in order to do so, it was necessary to destroy several absurd myths that have for decades been handed down from book to book and newspaper to newspaper, like hereditary maladies; notably the delusion that Grieg did little more than transplant to his garden the wild flowers of Norwegian folk-music—a delusion which has shamefully retarded the recognition of his rare originality; for, as a matter of fact, ninety-five hundredths of his music is absolutely and in every detail his own. No one familiar with only those works of his which are often heard, has a right to call me too enthusiastic; but I am quite willing to be called “uncritical”; for the older I get the more I become convinced that the alleged critical faculty of our time is a modern disease, a species of phylloxera threatening the best works of genius. Let us enjoy the fresh grapes from which the harmless wine of musical intoxication is made, leaving the raisins to the analysts and “critical” commentators.

My thanks are due to those who have given assistance in supplying material, notably Messrs. Frank van der Stucken, Edouard Colonne, Christian and Johannes Schiött, and Gerhard Schjelderup, who kindly allowed me to see the first half of his biography in a manuscript German version.

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

"To the question, who is the most original and poetic of living composers, there can to-day be but *one* answer : Edvard Grieg."—*La Mara*.

"Grieg is recognised far beyond his native country as one of the few masters who have enriched music with new means of melodic and harmonic expression, and created a national art distinguished by poetic feeling and the charm of many moods."—*Georg Capellen*.

"He has brought it about that Norwegian moods and Norwegian life have entered into every music-room in the whole world."—*Björnson*.

"Grieg's revolt against German classicism was the healthy instinct of a man who has a message to deliver, and seeks for it the most natural means of expression."—*Dr. Wm. Mason*.

"The North is most assuredly entitled to a language of its own."—*Robert Schumann*.

"Persevere ; I tell you, you have the gifts, and—do not let them intimidate you !"—*Liszt to Grieg*.

"A tone-poet is above all things a romanticist, who, however, if he develops into a genius, may also become a classic, like Chopin. Among the younger tone-poets I include Grieg."—*Hans von Bülow*.

"What charm, what inimitable and rich musical imagery ! What warmth and passion in his melodic phrases, what teeming vitality in his harmony, what originality and beauty in the turn of his piquant and ingenious modulations and rhythms, and in all the rest what interest, novelty, and independence."—*Tchaikovsky*.

"When I had revelled in the music of Chopin and Wagner, Liszt and Franz, to the point of intoxication, I fancied that the last word had been said in harmony and melody ; when, lo ! I came across the songs and pianoforte pieces of Grieg, and once more found myself moved to tears of delight."—*H. T. F.*

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
PREFACE	vii
BIRD'S EYE VIEW	ix
I. ANCESTRY AND CHILDHOOD—OLE BULL	i
II. AT THE LEIPSIK CONSERVATORY—GADE	13
III. FROM GERMANY TO NORWAY	22
IV. CHRISTIANIA—MARRIAGE—LISZT	27
V. IBSEN AND "PEER GYNT"	39
VI. GRIEG AT HOME—PERSONAL TRAITS—ANECDOTES	45
VII. CONDUCTOR AND PIANIST—DREYFUS INCIDENT— NINA GRIEG	59
VIII. NORWEGIAN FOLK-MUSIC—GRIEG'S ORIGINALITY	71
IX. ORCHESTRAL AND CHAMBER MUSIC	86
X. COMPOSITIONS FOR PIANOFORTE	101
XI. VOCAL COMPOSITIONS	111
XII. GRIEG'S ARTISTIC CREED	121
BIBLIOGRAPHY	127
EDVARD GRIEG'S WORKS	129

ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>To face page</i>
EDVARD GRIEG	<i>Frontispiece</i>
<i>From a Photograph by Otto Borgen, Bergen</i>	
GRIEG AS A BOY OF FIFTEEN	8
MR. AND MRS. GRIEG AND MR. AND MRS. BJÖRNSON	30
<i>From a Photograph by Karl Andersen, Christiania</i>	
GRIEG AND SVENDSEN, 1898	36
<i>From a Photograph by K. Nyblin</i>	
TWO VIEWS OF GRIEG'S HOUSE AT TROLDHAUGEN	46
A ROOM IN GRIEG'S HOUSE AT TROLDHAUGEN	48
<i>From a Photograph by Otto Borgen, Bergen</i>	
TROLDHAUGEN	50
FACSIMILE OF AN INVITATION (POSTCARD)	54
TWO VIEWS OF TROLDHAUGEN : THE VILLA ; GRIEG'S SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY	56
MR. AND MRS. GRIEG, LONDON, 1888	68
A GROUP OF DISTINGUISHED SCANDINAVIANS	78
GRIEG AND BJÖRNSON AT TROLDHAUGEN	92
EDVARD GRIEG, MAY 1904	98
<i>From a Photograph by Karl Andersen, Christiania</i>	
GRIEG AND DE GREEF, THE BELGIAN PIANIST	106
FACSIMILE OF GRIEG'S SONG, " A SWAN "	118
<i>By permission of the Publisher, C. F. Peters, Leipzig</i>	
FACSIMILE OF A NOTE ABOUT PADEREWSKI ,	122



I

ANCESTRY AND CHILDHOOD—OLE BULL

IT may sound paradoxical to say that Norway owes its greatest composer to the outcome of a battle fought in the eighteenth century in Scotland, but such is the case. It was in July 1745 that the Pretender Charles Edward Stuart landed in the Scottish county of Lorne, and on April 16 of the following year his fate was decided at the battle of Culloden, a few miles east of Inverness. It was an unequal contest, in which the Scotch were foredoomed to failure. There were only six thousand of them, whereas the Duke of Cumberland had twice that number; and while the English soldiers were well trained, well fed, and headed by experienced commanders, the Highlanders were ragged, starving, exhausted, and unofficered. In vain they valiantly flung themselves on the English front. Their undisciplined courage was opposed to the trained enemy's guns and bayonets and heavy charges of horse. In an hour all was over. The Pretender fled with his officers, and of his soldiers who escaped the carnage many were taken as prisoners to England, where the common men were permitted to cast lots, one in every twenty to be tried and hanged; the rest to be transported. The English were determined to subdue the spirit of the vanquished mountaineers, and in pursuit of this purpose they went so far as to prohibit the Highland garb.

In these troublous times, when everything seemed lost, many Scotchmen left their native country to seek a home

elsewhere. Among these was a merchant named Alexander Greig, of Aberdeen, a city which to this day harbours families bearing that name. Like others, he chose to emigrate to Norway, which in climate and general aspect sufficiently resembled Scotland to seem an acceptable substitute for home. He established himself at Bergen, and changed his name to Grieg in order to make it correspond in Norwegian to its proper pronunciation.* He did not sever all connection with his native country, however. A member of the Scotch Reformed Church, he was so strong in his adherence to his faith that he made an annual trip to Scotland to partake of the communion. He married Margretha Elisabeth Heitman.

Their son, John Grieg, continued the mercantile pursuit while serving at the same time as British Consul at Bergen, which was then, as it is now, of all Norwegian cities second in importance only to the capital, Christiania. He married Maren Regine Haslund, who presented to him a son, in whom there was thus already more Norwegian than Scotch blood. This son, Alexander Grieg, who also served as British Consul, married the Norwegian Gesine Judith Hagerup, and unto them was born the hero of our book, Edvard Grieg.†

Schopenhauer's doctrine that men of genius inherit their gifts from their mothers is borne out in Edvard Grieg's case, as in so many others. His father was a man of excellent

* In an autobiographic sketch of his school days Grieg says that the names of Generals Greigh and Elphinstone had been impressed on his memory deeply ever since his father had told him that his family arms, which bore a ship, denoted that his original ancestor was in all probability the Scotch Admiral Greigh.

† In cyclopædias we generally find his name given as Edvard Hagerup Grieg, but he does not sanction the middle name, and never uses it in his correspondence. "It is true," he writes to me, "that my baptismal name includes the Hagerup. My artist name, however, is simply E. G. The Hagerup which is to be found in most of the encyclopædias is derived in all probability from the archives of the Leipzig Conservatory."

character, of intelligence and culture ; but from him Edvard could have never derived his musical genius and the love of wild nature with which it is so closely associated. The elder Grieg did manifest some interest in music ; he even played the pianoforte a little, but the music he liked was not such as his son liked and wrote. When the two made a trip into the mountains together, the same difference was manifested in their love of nature. To cite Otto Schmid's obviously authentic remarks :

“Wherever the landscape presented evidence of human toil in one of those level fertile fields which are infrequent in the mountainous North, Alexander Grieg was pleased and apt to become imbued with an enthusiasm which his son, however, did not share. Where, on the other hand, nature revealed its grandeur and sublimity ; where snowy solitudes, amid towering, precipitous cliffs, sent their rivers of ice, their glaciers, down into the valley ; where the ice-coloured streams, after devious toilsome paths, thundered as cataracts over disintegrating rocks, the father was displeased by the sternness of the scenery, the rugged charms of which did not appeal to him ; whereas the son, overwhelmed by thrills of delight, was struck dumb in deep admiration.”

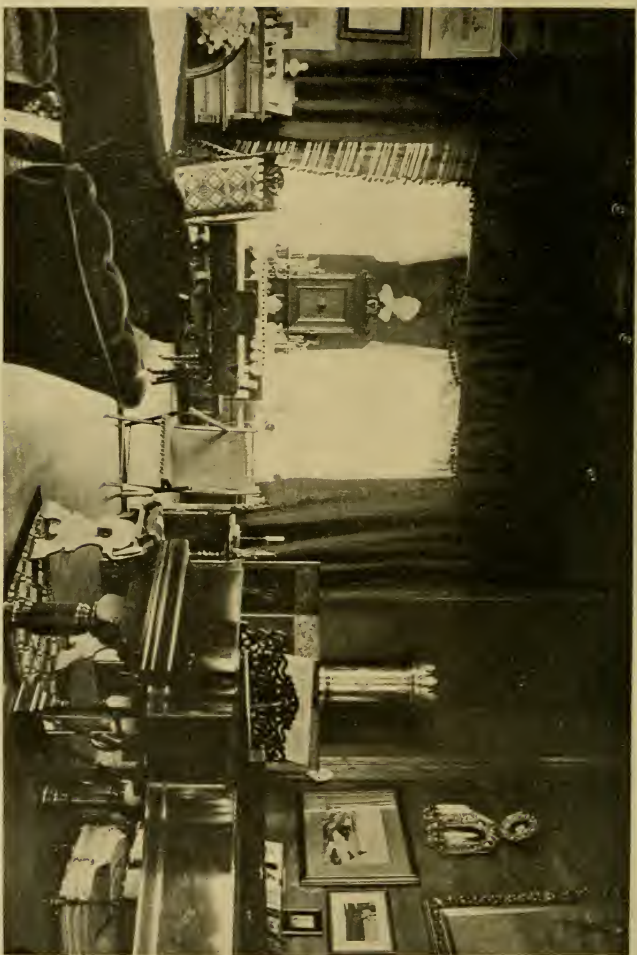
From his mother Edvard Grieg inherited not only his Norwegianism, but his artistic taste and his musical gifts. Her pedigree has been traced back as far as the beginning of the seventeenth century, to the famous Kjeld Stub.*

* In the appendix to his book, “Edvard Grieg og hans Vaerker,” Schjelderup prints the following genealogical table, to understand which it is necessary to know that in the old times, when towns were small, Norwegian children were named after them (or after a farm), and that names underwent further changes through *søn* (son) or *datter* (daughter) being grafted on to the father's name: “Magister Kjeld Stub, parish priest of Ullensaker, was born in Halland-Skaane, Sweden, 10/12, 1607, and died in 1663. He was married three times, the last time in 1653, to Maren Lauritzdatter Sverdrup, daughter of a minister in Vang, Hedemarken (Norway) ; year of death, 1669. They had three children, one of whom, Gunhild Stub (who died 1717), was married to Hans Lauritzen, minister in

Oddly enough, as the subjoined genealogical table shows, this remarkable personage was born in Sweden; to say, however, that Edvard Grieg, in view of this, and his Scotch paternal descent, was not a real Norwegian after all, would be to forget the intermarriages of two centuries and a half, which were usually with natives, and finally left the Norwegian element far preponderant.* Kjeld Stub appears to have been an astonishingly "strenuous" individual. He was engineer, teacher, parson, and army officer at different times, and betrayed qualities which Schjelderup thinks would, under other circumstances, have made a prominent artist of him. From him the composer may have possibly inherited his fiery temperament, his faculty for organising, and his power over the masses. The large admixture of clerical blood in Grieg's maternal pedigree is also noticeable; the word parish-parson occurs repeatedly.

Spydeberg. There were nineteen children, of whom Lorentze Hansdatter Spydeberg (1688-1751) was married at the age of twenty to Eiler Bertelsen Kongel, Stensvik in Kvaernaes. There were four children, one of whom was Magister Eiler Eilersen, latest Bishop in Christianssand (1718-1789). Through his mother he was related to Bishop Hagerup in Trondhjem, and at the age of twelve years he was adopted as a son and received the name Hagerup. He was married twice, the second time to Edvardine Magdalene Margrethe Christie (1755-1830), the daughter of a minister from Tysnaes, Söndhordland. Edvardine Christie was an aunt of the well-known Eisvolds-man magistrate Wilhelm Frimann Koren Christie. There were three children, one of whom was Edvard Hagerup, latest chief magistrate (*stiftsamtmand*) in Bergen (1781-1853). He always lived in Bergen, as his mother left Christianssand after his father's death; and at the age of eight Edvard Hagerup was placed in the Cathedral school in Bergen; he passed the examination in law, and was married in 1808 to Ingeborg Benedicte Janson (1786-1849), daughter of the court-agent (*hofagent*), Herman D. Janson, wholesale merchant in Bergen. There were eight children, one of whom, Gesine Judith Hagerup (1814-1875), married the English Consul at Bergen, Alexander Grieg (1806-1875). There were three daughters and two sons, including Edvard Hagerup Grieg, the composer."

* It must be remembered, too, that Kjeld Stub's birthplace, although now in Sweden, belonged in his time to Denmark and Norway.



A ROOM IN GRIEG'S HOUSE AT TROLIDHAUGEN

From a photograph by Otto Borgsen, Bergen

Apart from Kjeld Stub, the most important of Grieg's ancestors was his grandfather Edvard Hagerup. As Stiftamtmand of Bergen, the second city in Norway, he held one of the highest positions in the country. He lived till 1853, and as little Edvard was at that time already nine years old and had spent many a day in his ancestor's home, he still remembers him well. The Amtmand's funeral made a particularly deep impression on him, partly because of the pomp and solemnity attending it, partly because of the dirge, a funeral march composed by a Swedish Prince, Gustav, who died in his youth. This march was played by a military band, and parts of it stirred the boy so deeply that they became indelibly fixed in his memory.

Gesine Judith Hagerup was one of Edvard Hagerup's eight children (families were large in those days: Gunhild Stub had nineteen sons and daughters). She herself gave birth to three daughters and two sons; the composer Edvard, and John, who became a merchant in Bergen and who devoted his leisure moments to playing the violoncello. Most of the mother's musical talent was inherited by Edvard, and there was a good deal to inherit. Without in the least neglecting her household duties, Gesine Hagerup was able to devote much of her time to music. As a young girl she had received lessons in singing and pianoforte playing in Hamburg from Albert Methfessel, an excellent teacher and a composer of songs, some of which are still in favour. Subsequently she continued her studies in London, which she visited repeatedly with her husband, and thus she acquired a skill which enabled her to appear as soloist at concerts in Bergen. Grieg remembers particularly her splendid performance, with orchestra and chorus, of Beethoven's great Fantasia, opus 80. He also specially recalls the remarkable verve and rhythmic animation with which she always played the works of one of her favourites, Weber.

He could not have had a better teacher than his mother, she began to give him lessons when he was six years old.* More important than this instruction, however, was the musical atmosphere he was enabled to breathe at home. A boy who is destined to become a great genius can easily teach himself, but nothing can atone for the lack of that musical nutriment in childhood and youth which builds the very tissues of that part of the brain which is set aside for musical impressions. Madame Grieg not only played a great deal *en famille*, but once a week she invited those of her friends who were fond of the art to a musical soirée. On such occasions the place of honour was usually given to Mozart and Weber, from whose operas selections were performed, the hostess playing the orchestral parts on the pianoforte, and on occasions also assuming a vocal rôle to complete the cast.† In a corner of the room sat a happy boy listening to this music; it was executed by amateurs only, but while amateurs may fail here and there in technical proficiency, they usually play with more zeal and enthusiasm than the average professional; and it is the zeal and enthusiasm of the player and singer that stir the listener's soul most deeply and make him eager to become a musician too.

What Edvard heard stimulated him to renewed diligence in his practice, and his mother was seldom too far away to hear and correct the errors perpetrated by his

* Already a year before this he had gone on voyages of discovery. In view of his future greatness as an originator in the world of harmony, it is extremely interesting to read what he has written regarding that year; he speaks of "the wonderful mysterious satisfaction with which my arms stretched out to the piano to discover—not a melody; that was far off—no; it must be a harmony. First a third, then a chord of three notes, then a full chord of four, ending at last with both hands.—Oh, joy! a combination of five, the chord of the ninth. When I found that out my happiness knew no bounds."

† Mme. Grieg also arranged private theatricals for some of these occasions; several plays of her own were found among her papers after her death, and her son remembers some of her poems.

youthful fingers. She had set her mind on making him musical, and she succeeded beyond her fondest hopes. Not that it was all easy sailing at first. "Only too soon did it become clear to me," he writes, "that I had to practise just what was unpleasant. . . . There was no trifling with her if I spent the time in dreaming at the piano instead of busying myself with the lesson set. . . . But my unpardonable tendency to dreaming was already beginning to bring me the same difficulties which have accompanied me long enough throughout my life. Had I not inherited my mother's irrepressible energy as well as her musical capacity, I should never in any respect have succeeded in passing from dreams to deeds."

While Mozart and Weber were Mme. Grieg's favourites, she was by no means one of those amateurs who are deaf to the beauties of contemporary music. She appreciated not only the orthodox romanticist Mendelssohn, but the more radical and revolutionary Chopin, whose delightful and unique pieces were at that time understood by few, and therefore underrated. It is probable that Chopin's novel and audacious harmonies sowed the seeds from which subsequently sprang some of the loveliest flowers of Grieg's genius.

His first serious attempt to compose was made at the age of twelve or thirteen. One day he brought with him to school a music-book on which he had written: "Variations on a German Melody for the Piano, by Edvard Grieg, Opus 1." He wanted to show it to one of his classmates. Unfortunately, the teacher caught sight of it and examined it; then he suddenly seized the boy by his hair till his eyes were black, and advised him gruffly to leave such rubbish at home. (Subsequently this Opus 1. was consigned to the flames.) The teacher had no reason to like Edvard, who had been neglecting his three "R's," and who now confesses that in school he was "just as idle as at the piano." He was ingenious in devising excuses

for being late ; for instance, he would stand in the rain or under a dripping roof till he was soaked through to the skin, and the teacher had to send him home. "The only excuse I will make for myself is that school-life was in the last degree unsympathetic to me ; its materialism, its coarseness, its coldness were so abhorrent to my nature that I thought of the most incredible ways of escaping from it, if only for a short time. . . . I have not the least doubt that that school developed in me nothing but what was evil, and left the good untouched." *

Up to this time it had never occurred to Edvard that he might become an artist. He wanted to be a pastor. To be able to preach to an interested congregation seemed to him something very lofty. To be a prophet, a herald, that was what he liked. He had at this time also a great passion for poetry ; he knew all the poems in the reading-books by heart, and declaimed them to his parents and sisters. "And when my father, after dinner, wanted to take his little *siesta* in the armchair, I would not leave him in peace, but got behind a chair, which represented my pulpit, and declaimed away without any consideration."

From Edvard's tenth year on the Grieg family had lived at the fine estate of Landaas, a few kilometres from Bergen. One summer's day, when he was nearly fifteen years old, a rider at full gallop came up the road to Landaas. It was one of the idols of Grieg's dreams, Ole Bull. Something like an electric current seemed to pass through the boy when the world-famed violinist shook his hand : yet he was disenchanted to find one whom he regarded almost as a god smiling and joking just like ordinary mortals. He listened speechless to the astounding stories of his journeys in America.

* Some amusing anecdotes and reminiscences of these school days, as well as of the three years spent at the Leipsic Conservatory, may be found in a semi-humorous sketch, "My First Success," contributed by Grieg to Velhagen Klasing's *Monatshefte* (English version in *Contemporary Review*, July 1905).

Inasmuch as Ole Bull on more than one occasion exerted a great influence on Grieg's artistic career, and paved the way for it by his persistent efforts to establish a Norwegian art centre, it is of interest and pertinent to recall a few incidents in his romantic life. He, also, was born at Bergen, thirty-three years before Grieg, but his experience in school when his musical proclivities were discovered was quite different from Grieg's. The old rector of the Latin school said to him, "Take your fiddle in earnest, boy, and don't waste your time here." He followed this advice, and became a violinist, concerning whom no less an authority than Joachim said: "No artist in our time has possessed his poetic power." He went to Germany to study the violin with the famous Spohr, but found his style too academic to suit him. The capricious, fantastic Paganini was more to his taste, and him he chose for a model, so far as any model he may be said to have had. He soon won a fame and popularity hardly second to the great Italian's, and became an indefatigable traveller, giving concerts in the cities of Scandinavia, Russia, Germany, France, Italy, America. Once, in Paris, he tried to commit suicide by jumping into the river Seine, because his beloved violin had been stolen; but he was rescued, and a wealthy lady gave him another Guarneri. In 1853 his violin was again stolen by a Central American at Panama, when he was on the way to California with Mr. Strakosch. In trying to recover it he lost his steamer, and while waiting for the next fell a victim to yellow fever. A miniature revolution happening to be in progress, he was not only left unattended, but was obliged to leave his bed and lie on the floor to escape stray bullets. Some years later he was on an Ohio river steamer which crashed into another that had a load of petroleum. Both the steamers were at once surrounded with a circle of fire, but Ole Bull *grasped his violin*, jumped overboard, and succeeded in swimming ashore.

Perhaps the most memorable of his concert tours was that which he undertook in 1853 with the girl soprano, Adelina Patti. Reports of the wonderful art of this child had gone forth, and as one of the American critics remarked, "nothing short of the testimony we have seen could make us believe such a thing possible. Yet the whole artistic life of Ole Bull is a guarantee that nothing but sterling merit can take part in his concerts." Ole Bull's object in giving this particular series of concerts was to raise funds for carrying out a patriotic project of establishing a large Norwegian colony in Pennsylvania—"A New Norway," to cite his own words, "consecrated to liberty, baptized with independence, and protected by the Union's mighty flag." But he was too thoroughly an artist to be a good business man. After the forests had been cleared and eight hundred settlers made their homes there, he found that he had been swindled; the title to the land he had paid for was fraudulent, and all that remained of his earnings was devoured by the resulting lawsuits.

His disappointment was aggravated by the attitude of his countrymen when he returned to his home. He was unjustly accused of having speculated ruthlessly at the expense of those who had confided in him. He had another cause for dissatisfaction with his neighbours.

In view of the fact that, up to that time, Norway had depended on Danish plays, Danish actors, and Danish musicians, he, an ardent patriot, wanted to found a National Theatre in Bergen—a Norse theatre with a Norse orchestra. Such a theatre was actually opened on January 2, 1850, but when he found, a year later, that he could no longer bear the cost, he asked the Storting for a yearly appropriation. This was refused, and he was subsequently subjected to so many annoyances by his enemies* that after two years the theatre passed into other hands. In 1860, how-

* See the curious details in *Ole Bull: A Memoir*, by Sara Bull, 1883.

ever, he resumed his direction of it, appointing Björnstjerne Björnson as dramatic instructor. Three years later he tried to found a Norse Music Academy in Christiania. This Academy, writes Jonas Lie, was not founded; "but the seed—the thought—was at that time planted. Since then it has grown and matured, and to-day we have a body of artists and composers, and quite another musical culture ready to receive it."

When Ole Bull died in 1880 his patriotic aspirations and services were duly acknowledged. The King sent a telegram of condolence to the widow, expressing his personal as well as the national loss, and Björnstjerne Björnson said, in an address delivered before thousands of mourners: "Patriotism was the creative power in his life. When he established the Norse Theatre, assisted Norse art and helped the National Museum, his mighty instrument singing for other patriotic ends; when he helped his countrymen and others wherever he found them, it was not so much for the object, or the person, but for the honour of Norway."

Grieg played the organ at the funeral services, and his remarks, which followed Björnson's, must also be cited:

"Because more than any other thou wast the glory of our land, because more than any other thou hast carried our people with thee up towards the bright heights of art, because thou wast more than any other a pioneer of our young national music; more, much more, than any other, the faithful, warm-hearted conqueror of all hearts, because thou hast planted a seed which shall spring up in the future, and for which coming generations shall bless thee, with the gratitude of thousands upon thousands—for all this, in the name of our Norse memorial art, I lay this laurel wreath on thy coffin. Peace be with thy ashes!"

When Edvard Grieg spoke these words, and for the last time gazed upon the features of his friend and benefactor, he was thirty-seven years old. When he first became acquainted with him he was, as already stated, a lad of

about fifteen. The great violinist had returned from America for a temporary sojourn in his native town. He became a frequent visitor at the Grieg mansion, and he promptly discovered the gifts of Edvard, who improvised for him at the piano, and told him about his dreams and hopes of himself becoming a musician.

To cite Grieg's own words: "When he heard I had composed music, I had to go to the piano; all my entreaties were in vain. I cannot now understand what Ole Bull could find at that time in my juvenile pieces. But he was quite serious, and talked quietly to my parents. The matter of their discussion was by no means disagreeable to me. For suddenly Ole Bull came to me, shook me in his own way, and said, 'You are to go to Leipzig, and become a musician.' Everybody looked at me affectionately, and I understood just one thing, that a good fairy was stroking my cheek and that I was happy. And my good parents! Not one moment's opposition or hesitation; everything was arranged, and it seemed to me the most natural thing in the world."

II

AT THE LEIPSIK CONSERVATORY—GADE

By an interesting coincidence, the Leipsic Conservatory had been established in the same year that Edvard Grieg was born—1843. But its founder, Mendelssohn, had died four years later, and Schumann, who had been appointed instructor in score-reading, had gone to Dresden after one year's service; he died in 1856. The Conservatory was thus, at the time of Edvard's arrival, shorn of its chief glory; but it still boasted the names of several musicians famed in the musical world, among them Moscheles, the eminent pianist and composer; E. F. E. Richter, author of the celebrated treatise on harmony, of which more than twenty editions have been printed; E. F. Wenzel, the noted piano teacher; Moritz Hauptmann, the eminent theorist; and Carl Reinecke, famed as Mozart player, composer, and conductor of the Gewandhaus concerts.

When Grieg was sent to Leipzig he felt "like a parcel stuffed with dreams." On arriving in the "mediæval" city (Leipzig has changed very much since that time), the "dark, tall, uncanny houses and narrow streets" almost took away his breath. He continued to wear a short blouse with a belt, such as the boys wore at his own home; it was his only reminder of Norway, and he was very homesick. But soon he recovered, and he says, "Although I had not the slightest idea what it meant to study music, I was dead certain that the miracle would happen, and that

in three years, when my course of studies came to an end, I should go back home a wizard-master in the kingdom of sounds." Great surprises and disappointments were, however, in store for him.

The first of his piano teachers was the renowned Plaidy, who used to play for his pupils the slow introductory movements of Mendelssohn's *Capricios*, and then, when he reached the more difficult *allegros*, remark, as if casually : "And so on ;" seriously imagining that the boys did not see through him ! Some of the students, among them J. F. Barnett, nevertheless showed brilliant technical results under him. Grieg was much better pleased with his next teachers, E. F. Wenzel, the gifted friend of Schumann, who soon became his idol ; and the famous Ignaz Moscheles. For him, also, Grieg stands up with the greatest warmth :

"It is true that he was naïve enough to believe that he imposed on us by seizing every opportunity to run down Chopin and Schumann, whom I secretly adored ; but he could play beautifully : and he did ; often taking up the whole lesson. Especially his interpretations of Beethoven, whom he worshipped, were splendid. They were conscientious, full of character, and noble, without any straining after effect. I studied Beethoven's Sonatas with him by the dozen. Often I could not play four bars together without his laying his hands on mine, pushing me gently from my seat, and saying, 'Now listen how I do that.' In this way I learned many a little technical secret, and came to value his expressive interpretations at the very highest."

In the harmony class it was characteristic of Grieg that, as he confesses, he always wrote, to the given bass, harmonies which pleased himself, instead of those prescribed by the rules of thorough bass. But E. F. Richter was not the man to encourage these "harmonies of the future," as one might call them ; with an indulgent smile he would say : "No ! Wrong !" and correct them with thin pencil marks. His other harmony teacher, Robert Papperitz,

gave him a freer rein, which encouraged him to go so far out of the beaten path in choral works as to introduce chromatic passages in the voice parts wherever he could. This was too much, even for Papperitz, who exclaimed one day: "No! this chromatic work won't do; you are becoming a second Spohr!" Inasmuch as Spohr was, in Grieg's opinion, "an academic pedant of the first rank," he did not enjoy this criticism. Very different were his feelings when, one day, after he had played one of his own compositions, Moritz Hauptmann laid his hand on his shoulder, and said: "Good day, my lad; we must become friends." Furthermore, a fugue by Grieg on the name "Gade," which found no favour in the eyes of Richter, won Hauptmann's approval to such a degree that, against all custom, after he had read it through, he exclaimed: "That must sound very pretty—let me hear it;" and when the boy had finished, he said, with his gentle smile: "Very pretty, very musical."

In some departments of the Conservatory there seemed to be a curious lack of system. Before Edvard had received a single lesson in violin playing or score-reading Reinecke set him the task of writing a string quartet; nay, he even asked him to compose an overture, although he had been taught nothing about form and instrumentation. The quartet was, nevertheless, written—"a mediocre piece on the lines of Schumann, Gade, and Mendelssohn—but when it came to the overture he literally stuck in the middle, and could get no further. "There was no class in the Conservatorium in which one could get a grounding in these things."

While the untamed Norwegian lad found it hard to breathe the atmosphere of an institution in which Mendelssohn was the latest approvable composer, whereas his own idols, Chopin and Schumann, not to speak of Wagner, were looked at as rather dangerous revolutionists, he now declares that, if he made little progress, the fault was

largely his own ; in part, it was, perhaps, national. "We Norwegians, especially, usually develop too slowly to show in the least at the age of eighteen what we are good for." There were other "foreigners" at the Conservatory who "made immense strides forward;" among them, by an interesting coincidence, as many as five boys who subsequently became leaders in the musical world of London. Grieg writes :

"Among these were Arthur Sullivan, afterwards so celebrated as the composer of the 'Mikado,' the pianists Franklin Taylor and Walter Bache, and Edward Dannreuther—too early taken from us, so gifted and so unwearied as the champion of Liszt, and who also was one of the first to enter the lists on behalf of Wagner in England. He was an exceedingly able man, and an eminent player. Lastly there was the fine musician, John Francis Barnett, whom I have mentioned above, and who passed his life as a teacher in London. Sullivan at once distinguished himself by his talent for composition, and for the advanced knowledge of instrumentation which he had acquired before he came to the Conservatorium. While still a student he wrote the music to Shakespeare's 'Tempest,' a few bars of which he once wrote in my album, and which displays the practised hand of an old master. Although I did not come across him much, I once had the pleasure of passing an hour with him, which I shall not forget. It was during a performance of Mendelssohn's 'St. Paul.' We sat and followed the music with the score, and what a score! It was Mendelssohn's own manuscript, which Sullivan had succeeded in borrowing for the occasion from the Director of the Conservatorium, Conrad Schleinitz, who was, as is well known, an intimate friend of Mendelssohn's. With what reverence we turned from one page to another! We were amazed at the clear, firm notes which so well expressed the ideas of the writer."

The truth gradually dawned on Grieg that if he would



GRIEG AS A BOY OF 15

progress like these English boys he must, like them, submit patiently to drudgery. The pangs of conscience drove him from one extreme to the other ; he worked day and night, scarcely allowing himself time to eat and sleep, and the result was a complete collapse, in the spring of 1860. As soon as his mother was informed of his condition she hastened from Bergen to his bedside. The illness culminated in a severe case of pleurisy, or inflammation of the membrane enfolding the lungs. In those days physicians had not yet discovered modern methods of dealing with this serious malady, and the result was that Grieg's health remained impaired all his life ; for more than four decades he has had only one lung—the right—to breathe with. All the more must we marvel at his achievements ! But genius cannot be curbed even by impaired vitality ; if it could, the best works of Wagner and Chopin would never have been written.

Mme. Grieg took her son back with her to Bergen, where he slowly improved. In the hope that he might recover completely if he remained during the winter too, his parents were anxious to have him stay under their roof ; but he preferred to return to Leipsik, where, even if the Conservatory was not quite to his liking, there was abundant opportunity to hear good music and meet prominent musicians. He applied himself diligently to his tasks, and was thus able, in the spring of 1862, to pass his examinations with credit ; he played on this occasion the four pieces subsequently printed as his opus 1, and won applause and praise both as composer and performer.*

* The first occasion, however, when Grieg's music was performed was in the spring of 1860, when, as Otto Schmid relates, a Conservatory pupil played some of his piano pieces, which, however, have not been printed. Concerning the examination concert in 1862, just referred to, Grieg writes : " I played some pianoforte pieces of my own ; they were lame productions enough, and I still blush to-day that they appeared in print as opus 1. ; but it is a fact that I had an immense success, and was called for several times."

Returning to the North, he enjoyed a Norwegian summer at the country home of his parents at Landaas. In the following season he gave his first concert in Bergen, at which his Conservatory string quartet was produced, beside the piano pieces of opus 1, and the Four Songs for Alto, opus 2. With the net receipts, which were encouraging, he purchased a number of scores of orchestral and chamber music, and now, for the first time, applied himself diligently to score-reading, an important branch of his art to which the Leipsic Conservatory appears to have paid insufficient attention after the departure of Schumann. In the spring, 1863, he took up his sojourn in Copenhagen, which, being a much larger city than Bergen, offered better opportunities to an aspiring musician, and which, moreover, was the home of the head of the Scandinavian school, the famous Niels W. Gade.

It has often been said that Gade was at one time the teacher of Grieg. This is not strictly true, for Grieg never took lessons of him; yet he frequently asked the older master's opinion of his new works, and admits that he may have profited more by his hints than by the Conservatory course at Leipsic. Shortly after arriving in the Danish capital (in May 1863), Grieg met Gade at Klampenborg, a popular summer resort near Copenhagen, and was asked if he had anything of his own composition to show. Now, while it is true that Schubert and Mendelssohn had written two of their masterworks—the “Erlking,” and the “Midsummer Night's Dream” overture, as lads—most of the other masters, if asked that question at Grieg's age (he was not quite twenty), would have been obliged to answer as he did—that he had nothing of importance to show. “Very well then,” retorted Gade, “go home and write a symphony.” This suggestion caused Grieg to pull himself together, and a fortnight later he had actually composed and orchestrated the first movement of a symphony, which he submitted to Gade, who was much pleased with it, and

spoke words of encouragement that fired the young man's ambition as nothing else had done theretofore.*

Gade has been called the chief of the Scandinavian romantic school, and such he was until Grieg came forward with his best works. Gade's compositions have been shelved too soon; his "Ossian" overture and one or two of his symphonies would even now give more pleasure to concert goers than most of the contemporary products of Germany and France, because he was a melodist as well as a colourist. Hans von Bülow likened his mastery of orchestration to Wagner's and Liszt's; he was pleased with the deliberateness with which Gade scored his works, and his conscientious regard for details, in reference to which he cites the English, "Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle." But what made the eminent Danish composer specially interesting to his contemporaries was the Scandinavian local colour in his works. Concerning this, Robert Schumann wrote in one of the last essays that came from his suggestive pen:

"We have in him an entirely new artistic type. It appears, indeed, as if the nations bordering on Germany were trying to emancipate themselves from the leadership of German music; a chauvinist (*Deutschtümler*) might grieve thereat, but to a thinker and student of mankind it will seem natural and gratifying. Thus Chopin represents his native country; Bennett, England; in Holland, J. Verhulst arouses hopes of becoming a worthy representative of his country; in Hungary, likewise, national efforts are being made. And while they all regard the German nation as their first and most esteemed teacher, no one should be

* This juvenile symphony was afterwards completed, but has never been published in its entirety. In a conversation with the Rev. W. A. Gray, reported in the *Woman at Home* for January, 1894, Grieg said that old Lumbye conducted it one evening (he thought it was in 1864) at a symphony concert at the Tivoli. The second and third movements are now accessible in print as opus 14, "Two Symphonic Pieces" for piano, four hands.

surprised at their wishing to have a national musical language of their own, without becoming faithless to the teachings of their mistress. . . .

“In the north of Europe, too, we have seen manifestations of national tendencies. Lindblad, in Stockholm (the teacher of Jenny Lind), translated for us the old folk-songs, and Ole Bull, though not a productive talent of the first rank, endeavoured to acclimate with us the strains of his native land. The new school of gifted Scandinavian poets must have stimulated the local musicians, in case they were not reminded by the mountains and lakes, the runes and the auroral displays, of the fact that *the North is most decidedly entitled to a language of its own.*

“Our young composer (Gade) also was educated by the poets of his fatherland; he knows and loves them all; the old fairy tales and legends accompanied him on his boyish walks, and Ossian’s giant harp loomed up across the water from the English coast. Thus there is manifested in his music, beginning with the Ossian overture, for the first time a decided and specific Northern character.”

Nearly all the biographic sketches of Grieg in encyclopædias and elsewhere cite him as having said, after becoming acquainted with the young Norwegian composer Nordraak: “It was as though scales fell from my eyes; through him, for the first time, I became acquainted with the Northern folk-music and with my own bent. We abjured the Gade-Mendelssohn insipid Scandinavianism, and entered with enthusiasm on the new path which the Northern school is now following.” But in private letters to the author of this volume Grieg has twice regretted if he should have uttered such a sneer at Gade, whom he has always held in the highest esteem, both as a man and a composer.*

* “Ich bin mir nicht bewusst diese Ansicht jemals in so crassen Worten ausgedrückt zu haben. Und ich bin ein zu grosser Verehrer von Gade in seinen besten Werken, und bin ihm zu viel schuldig, um eine so pietätlose Ansicht colportieren zu helfen. Also bitte, heraus damit!”

However, if he had made that remark it would not have been wide of the mark, for Gade certainly does show the influence of Mendelssohn and other German composers much more than that of the Scandinavian folk-music. Had Grieg followed his example he would not have become a specifically Norse composer, but—what some have foolishly reproached him for not being—a cosmopolite. Luckily there were two other Scandinavian musicians, Norwegians both, who led him back from the over-tilled German fields to the virgin forests, the peasants, the peaks, the fjords of Norway.

III

FROM GERMANY TO NORWAY

THE two men referred to were Ole Bull and Richard Nordraak. It was stated on a previous page that Ole Bull on two occasions exerted a great influence on Grieg's career. The first was when he persuaded his parents to send him to Leipsic ; with the second we are now concerned.

Ole Bull always, when possible, went home to spend the summer in his country house at Valestrand, on the Island Osteröen, about twenty miles east of Bergen. It was here that Grieg, beginning with the year 1864, formed an intimate friendship with the great violinist. They often played Mozart's sonatas and other duos together ; sometimes John Grieg joined them with his violoncello, and they had trios. At other times Edvard Grieg and Ole Bull made excursions together into their favourite mountain regions, and these were particularly potent in directing the trend of Grieg's genius. Professor R. B. Anderson once asked Ole Bull what had inspired his weird and original melodies. " His answer was that from his earliest childhood he had taken the profoundest delight in Norway's natural scenery. He grew eloquent in his poetic description of the grand and picturesque flower-clad valleys, filled with sighing groves and singing-birds ; of the silver-crested mountains, from which the summer sun never departs ; of the melodious brooks, babbling streams, and thundering rivers ; of the blinking lakes that sink their deep thoughts to starlit skies ; of the far-penetrating fjords, and the many thousand

islands on the coast. He spoke with special emphasis of the eagerness with which he had devoured all myths, folk-tales, ballads, and popular melodies; and all these things, he said, 'have made my music.'

Sara Bull relates that "when, in early childhood, playing alone in the meadows, he saw a delicate blue-bell gently moving in the breeze, he fancied he heard the bell ring, and the grass accompany it with most enrapturing fine voices; *he fancied he heard nature sing*, and thus music revealed itself, or came to his consciousness as something that might be reproduced. . . . He was never happier than when he could persuade his grandmothers to tell him strange ghost stories, and sing the wild songs of the peasantry." He soon formed the habit of visiting remote valleys, listening to the dances and other tunes of the peasants, and transferring them to his violin; and it was with these wild tunes—with the "Saeterbesoeget," the "Saeterjentens Sondag," "En Moders Boen," and the like, that he aroused the wildest enthusiasm of his audiences in all parts of Europe and America.

To hear such a man play, to play with him, to accompany him to the home of the peasants and hear their music there—these were the privileges of Edvard Grieg in his twenty-first year and later; and the consequences were inevitable. Ole Bull, whose motto was, "My calling is Norse music," was naturally pleased to have so sympathetic and talented a young companion, although there were reasons for disapproval of him. While both agreed in their love of Mozart, the violinist had no use for the modern composers of whom his young friend was enamoured. Wagner he positively detested: "he ought to be lodged in prison," he used to say. In Grieg's compositions, too, he could not fail to discover traces of heretical modernity, even at this early period, but he generously made allowance for these in view of other qualities that did appeal to his taste.

At this early period in Grieg's artistic career we already come across one of his noble traits. He may have been

weakened in body, but his mind was sturdy and inflexible. Neither of his best friends—his father and Ole Bull—approved of what was most original and best in him, yet that did not prevent him from following whither his fancy led, regardless of consequences. Herein he resembled Wagner, who, when his contemporaries found him too “Wagnerian,” retorted by becoming more and more so.*

His determination to follow the bent of his own genius must have been greatly strengthened at this time by his friendship with Rikard Nordraak, a young Norwegian composer of rare talent, who might have done as much for his native country as Grieg himself, had not death carried him off before he had completed his twenty-fourth year. Even in this short span of life he created some notable works, among them pianoforte pieces, settings of his cousin Björnson’s “Mary Stuart in Scotland,” “Sigurd Slembe,” and the patriotic song, “Ja vi elsker.” Like Ole Bull, he was patriot to the verge of fanaticism, and Grieg, who had loved his fatherland above everything even before he knew these two men, had his glowing feelings fanned to a bright flame by intercourse with them, especially with Nordraak, who, being only a year older, was the more suitable companion for him. They first met in the winter of 1864, and it was a case of friendship at first sight. Nordraak accompanied Grieg to his home, and there, as on many subsequent occasions, they indulged in music to their hearts’ content, and discussed patriotic topics.

The most important effect of the friendship with

* It has been related that when Grieg showed his first violin sonata to Gade, that eminent composer discovered therein much evidence of talent, but thought it “too Norwegian.” But Grieg informs me that this is an error: “The first sonata (op. 8) had Gade’s warm sympathy, the second (in G), on the other hand, he found too Norwegian.” After the first performance of this sonata in Copenhagen, Gade came into the artist’s room and said: “Dear Grieg, the next sonata you must really make less Norwegian.” Grieg was in a defiant mood, and retorted: “On the contrary, Professor, the next will be more so!”

Nordraak was that it hastened Grieg's journey from Germany to Norway, musically speaking. Up to this point he had felt the Leipsic shackles—the need of being more or less German in his themes and modes of utterance. He had been in danger of being swallowed up in the great maelstrom of German music; but he saw his peril in time and steered back into the Norwegian branch of the ocean. He had been somewhat timid, but Nordraak's courage and enthusiasm proved contagious. He now dared to be himself and Norse. If he was proud of being a Norwegian by birth, why should he be ashamed to be Norwegian in his music? He wrote his four "Humoresken," opus 6, dedicated them to Nordraak, and the die was cast. Thenceforth he was free to do as he pleased, and in a short time the germs of individuality that are not absent even in his first works grew and expanded until they formed a new kind of music differing from the classical German art somewhat as an exotic orchid of the forest differs from our no less beautiful but more regular garden flowers.

There are several ways of fostering national art: by discussion, by creation, and by public performance. Grieg and Nordraak adopted all of these methods. In the winter of 1864-65 they founded at Copenhagen the Euterpe Society, the object of which was to bring forward the works of young Northern composers. With them were associated the opera composer Hornemann and the organist and composer Matthison-Hansen. But the Euterpe lived only a few seasons. In the spring Nordraak left Copenhagen and went to Berlin, while Grieg spent the summer with the Danish author Benjamin Feddersen, in the village Rungsted. The following details are cited from the interview placed on record by the Rev. W. A. Gray, in *The Woman at Home*:

"Whether it was the lovely situation, or the invigorating air which inspired me, I won't pretend to say. At any

rate, within eleven days I had composed my sonata for the pianoforte, and very soon after my first sonata for the violin. I took them both to Gade, who was living out at Klampenborg. He glanced through them with satisfaction, nodded, tapped me on the shoulder, and said:

“‘That’s very nice indeed. Now we’ll go over them carefully and look into all the seams.’

“So we climbed a small steep staircase to Gade’s studio, where he sat down at the grand pianoforte and played with absolute inspiration.

“I had often been told that, when Gade was inspired, he drank copious draughts of water. That day the Professor emptied four large water-bottles.

“Gade, however, wasn’t always so good-humoured. When, for example, I brought him some time afterwards the score of my overture ‘In Autumn,’ he shook his head:

“‘No, Grieg; that won’t do. You must go home and write something better.’

“I was quite disheartened by this verdict. Soon after, however, I obtained an unexpected revenge. I arranged the overture as a duet for the pianoforte and sent it to Stockholm, where, just then, the Academy of Music had announced a prize for the best overture. I was awarded the prize by the judges, of whom Gade was one. He must either have forgotten the piece in the intervening time, or have been in a very bad temper on the day when I showed it him.”

The overture referred to—Grieg’s first orchestral work—had been composed during his first sojourn in Rome, in the winter of 1865. In the following March he was deeply grieved by the announcement of the death of Nordraak, which he commemorated in tones by writing a funeral march. He narrowly escaped joining his friend, for he was prostrated by the Roman fever. Fortunately, some Danish friends were at hand to take care of him, but it was not till May that he was able to return to Norway.

IV

CHRISTIANIA—MARRIAGE—LISZT

IF Grieg's "Jeg elsker dig" ("I love thee") is one of the most impassioned and popular of all love songs, there is a reason for it. The date of its composition is 1864; in that year he became engaged to his cousin, Miss Nina Hagerup, love for whom had inspired him to set to music H. C. Andersen's heartfelt lines. Three years, however, elapsed before he was able to marry her. Miss Hagerup's mother had no high opinion of her prospective son-in-law; "He is a nobody," she said to a friend; "he has nothing, and he writes music that nobody cares to listen to." The singer Stenberg (one of the best interpreters of Grieg's lieder) advised her to wait and see, predicting that Edvard would become famous.*

There was no opposition to the marriage; it was simply the old story: the composer was too poor to support a wife. When he returned to Norway from Rome he took up his residence in Christiania, eager to do any work that would contribute to his subsistence. On his way to the

* Nina Hagerup was born at Bergen in 1845, a granddaughter of Edvard Hagerup. After her seventh year she lived at Copenhagen. Her mother was a famous Danish actress, who assumed the management of her first husband's (Werligh's) company. After her marriage to Hermann Hagerup she left the stage. Nina Hagerup evidently inherited her mother's dramatic gifts, as revealed in her singing of Grieg's songs. During the period of the engagement to his Danish bride, Grieg was so much under Danish influence that Schjelderup speaks of it as the Danish period in the development of his genius.

Norwegian capital he made a stop of a few months at Copenhagen, where he took lessons on the organ of Matthison-Hansen, and played at the German church (Friedrichskirche) during his teacher's vacation. It was toward the end of September 1866 that he arrived at Christiania. Soon thereafter he gave a concert with the aid of his *fiancée* and Mme. Normann Neruda (Lady Hallé), the eminent violinist. The programme was notable, inasmuch as it was probably the first one ever made up entirely of Norwegian music. It contained the following numbers:

1. Grieg: Violin sonata, opus 8.
2. Nordraak: Songs.
3. Grieg: Humoresken, for piano, opus 6.
4. Grieg: Songs.
5. Grieg: Sonata for pianoforte, opus 7.
6. Kjerulf: Songs.

This concert was a most encouraging success, both with the public and the press. Grieg's position seemed assured. The Philharmonic Society appointed him conductor, and he was in great demand as a teacher. For a time all his energies were thus absorbed, so that little leisure remained for composing. For eight years Christiania was his home. He married Nina Hagerup on June 11, 1867, and gave subscription concerts with his young wife, beside the Philharmonic entertainments. Presently, however, interest in the new national movement began to subside, and his life was made a burden by cabals which owed their existence partly to jealousy, partly to the energetic war he had been waging on amateurish mediocrity. When, in 1868, his best friend and ally, Halfdan Kjerulf, died, he felt quite isolated, and became discouraged.* In the following year he lost

* Kjerulf, who was born in 1815, was really the first of the Norwegian national composers. He established a series of subscription concerts at Christiania in 1857. Among his compositions there are about a hundred songs and forty piano pieces that are

his daughter, aged thirteen months, the only child he ever had, and the cup of bitterness seemed emptied to the dregs. Yet he persevered stubbornly in his struggles to educate the musical taste of the community. Among the works produced under his direction were Schumann's "Paradise and the Peri" and "Gipsy Life," Gade's "Elverskud," Lindblad's "Vinterquäll," Kjerulf's "Trubaduren," Liszt's "Tasso," selections from "Lohengrin," Mendelssohn's "Elijah," Mozart's Requiem. He also found time, amidst all his discouragements, to compose some of his best works—songs, pianoforte pieces, and the superb piano concerto. This concerto, he informs me, was written during his vacation, in the summer of 1868, in the Danish village of Sölleröd, whence we may infer that, like Wagner, he was quite as busy, in his own way, during his "vacation" as during the "season" in town.

One of the pleasantest episodes of the eight years' sojourn in Christiania was related by Grieg himself in an article he wrote in 1902 as a contribution to a brochure printed in honour of his dear friend Björnson's seventieth birthday. It is one of those fragments that make one regret keenly that Grieg has not written his autobiography.

"It was on Christmas Eve, 1868, at the Björnsons," he relates. * "They lived at that time in the Rosenkranz Street. My wife and I were, so far as I can recall, the only guests. The joy of the children was great. On the floor in the middle of the room there stood a huge Christmas tree, brilliantly illuminated. All the servants came in, and Björnson spoke, warmly and impressively, as is his wont. Then he said to me: 'Now you may play the choral, Grieg!' and although I was secretly somewhat

mostly tinged with Norse colour. He has been referred to as a martyr, but Grieg writes: "Kjerulf lived in Christiania as teacher and composer, appreciated by all."

* My translation is made after the German version, which appeared in the *Berliner Tageblatt*.

displeased at having to play the rôle of organist, I obeyed, as a matter of course, without remonstrance. It was a Grundtvig choral with *thirty-two* stanzas! With stoic resignation I submitted to my fate. At first I bore myself bravely, but the endless repetitions had a soporific effect. I gradually became lethargic, like a medium. And when we had at last lumbered through all the stanzas, Björnson exclaimed: 'Is it not wonderfully beautiful? I shall now read it to you.' And once more the thirty-two stanzas were inflicted on us. I was entirely overcome.

"Among the Christmas presents there was a book for me, Björnson's ('Short) Pieces.' On the title-page he had written: 'Thanks for your (Short) Pieces. Herewith a few to match them.' The reference was to the first volume of my 'Lyrical Pieces,' just published, of which I had sent him a copy that day. Among these there is one with the title 'Vaterlandslied' ('Patriotic Song'). This I played for Björnson, and he liked it so well that he felt inclined to write a poem to it. I was delighted. Afterwards, however, I was afraid it would remain a mere inclination. He had other things in hand. The very next day, however, I found him, to my surprise, in creative fervour over it. 'I am getting on with it finely,' he said. 'It is to be a song for all young Norwegians. But at the beginning there is something that has so far baffled me. A quite definite *Wortklang*. I feel that the melody demands it, yet it eludes me. But it will come.' Then we parted.

"The next morning, while I was sitting in my garret room in the Upper Wall Street giving a lesson to a young lady, some one in the street pulled the bell cord as if he were trying to tear out the whole thing. Then there was a clattering as if a wild horde were breaking in, and a voice shouting, 'Forward! Forward! Hurrah! I have it! Forward!' My pupil trembled like an aspen leaf. My wife, in the adjoining room, was almost frightened out of her wits. But when, a moment later, the door was opened, and



BJÖRNSON,

MRS. GRIEG.

MRS. BJÖRNSON.

MR. GRIEG.

From a photograph by Karl Anderson, Christiania

Björnson stood there, joyous and beaming like a sun, there was great glee. And then we listened to the beautiful poem just completed :

Fremad ! Födres hoie Härtag var.
Fremad ! Nordmand, ogsaa vi det tar !

“The song was sung for the first time by the students at their torchlight procession for Welhaven, in 1868.”

In the same week that this amusing episode occurred, a letter was written that was destined to prove a great aid to Grieg in his struggles. On December 29, 1868, Franz Liszt wrote to him, from Rome, the following letter, in French :

“Monsieur, it gives me great pleasure to tell you of the sincere enjoyment I derived from a perusal of your sonata (Opus 8). It bears witness to a strong talent for composition, a talent that is reflective, inventive, provided with excellent material, and which needs only to follow its natural inclinations to rise to a high rank. I comfort myself with the belief that you will find in your country the success and encouragement you deserve ; nor will you miss them elsewhere ; and if you visit Germany this winter I invite you cordially to spend some time at Weimar, that we may become acquainted. Veuillez bien recevoir, monsieur, l'assurance de mes sentiments d'estime et de considération très distinguée.”

Without exception, the writers on Grieg have assumed that he had sent his sonata to Liszt for a critical opinion. Now, Liszt complains, in one of his letters, of the mountains of manuscript and printed music thus sent to him by composers ; but Grieg was not one of these ; he assures me that he had not sent Liszt anything, and had had no personal relations with him up to that time (“Ich hatte Liszt nichts geschickt und hatte überhaupt gar keine persönliche Beziehungen zu ihm”). All the more significant was that cordial letter from Liszt ; it indicated that that great

pianist and composer, whose chief delight in life was the discovery and encouragement of musical genius, had scented a new track, which he, amid the surrounding wilds of worthless manuscripts, was as eager to follow as a naturalist-explorer is to discover new flora or fauna in regions unknown. And the letter had momentous consequences. Unsolicited commendation from one so famous as Liszt was a great feather in the cap of a twenty-five-year-old composer; it induced the Norwegian Government to grant Grieg a sum of money which enabled him, in the following year, to visit Rome again, and there to meet Liszt personally. He left Christiania in October, and a few months later he wrote to his parents two extremely interesting letters regarding his visits to Liszt, which he has fortunately given to the world.* The first meeting was at the monastery near the Forum Romanum which Liszt made his home when in town. The Danish musician, Ravnkilde, who resided in Rome, had told Grieg that Liszt liked to have his invited visitors bring along something to show and to play.

“Unfortunately,” Grieg writes, “my last compositions were at home or in Germany; so I had to go to Winding, to whom I had given a copy of my last violin sonata, and play ‘the giver who takes his present back.’ Winding kept the cover, I took the contents, and having written on the outside, ‘Til Dr. F. Liszt med beundring’ [‘to Dr. F. Liszt with admiration’], I took also my funeral march on the death of Nordraak and a volume of my songs (the one with the ‘Ausfahrt’ in it [Opus 9]), and with all these under my arm I tramped down the street, with, I must admit, some qualms, which, however, I might have saved myself, for a more kindly disposition than Liszt’s is rarely met with. He came smilingly towards me and said, in the most genial manner:

* The originals were first printed in 1892 in a pamphlet issued in Bergen by way of celebrating Grieg’s silver wedding.

“ ‘Nicht wahr, wir haben ein bisschen korrespondirt?’
(‘We have had some little correspondence, haven’t we?’)

“I told him that it was thanks to his letters that I was now here—which made him laugh quite like Ole Bull. His eyes in the meantime were fixed with a hungry expression on the package I had under my arm. ‘Ah, ha,’ I thought, ‘Ravnskilde was right.’ And his long spider-like fingers approached the package in such an alarming manner that I thought it advisable to open it at once. He now commenced to turn over the leaves, that is to say, he skimmed over the first movement of the sonata, and that there was no sham about his really reading it he soon showed by significant nods or a ‘bravo,’ or a ‘sehr schön’ [‘very fine’] when he came across one of the best passages. He had now become interested, but my courage dropped below zero when he asked me to play the sonata. It had never occurred to me to attempt the whole score on the pianoforte, and I was anxious, on the other hand, to avoid stumbling when playing for him. But there was no help for it.”

“So I started on his splendid American grand (Chickering). Right at the beginning, where the violin starts in with a rather baroque but national passage, he exclaimed: ‘Ei wie keck! Nun hören Sie mal, das gefällt mir. Noch einmal bitte!’ (How bold that is! Look here, I like that. Once more, please.) And where the violin again comes in adagio, he played the violin part on the upper octaves of the piano with an expression so beautiful, so marvellously true and singing, that it made me smile inwardly. These were the first tones I heard Liszt play; and now we passed rapidly into the allegro, he taking the violin part, I the piano. My spirits rose gradually, because his approval, which he manifested in a truly lavish way, did me good, and I felt myself imbued with the strongest feelings of gratitude. When we had come to the end of the first movement, I asked his permission to play a piano solo, selecting the

minuet in the set of 'Humoresques' which you surely remember. When I had played the first eight measures and repeated them, he sang along the melody, and did it with an expression of a certain heroic power which I understood very well. I observed that it was the national peculiarities he liked; this I had suspected before going to him, and had therefore taken with me the pieces in which I had tried to strike the national strings.

"After playing the minuet I felt that if it were possible to get Liszt to play for me, now was the time; he was visibly inspired. I asked him, and he shrugged his shoulders a little; but when I said it could not be his intention that I should leave the South without having heard a single tone by him, he made a turn and then muttered: 'Nun ich spiele was Sie wollen, ich bin nicht so' ('Very well, I'll play whatever you like, I am not like that*'); and forthwith he seized a score he had lately finished, a kind of a funeral procession to the grave of Tasso, a supplement to his famous symphonic poem for the orchestra, 'Tasso: Lamento e Trionfo.' Then he sat down and put the keys in motion. Yes, I assure you, he discharged (*udspyede*), if I may use so inelegant an expression, one volley after another of heat and flame and vivid thoughts. It sounded as if he had evoked the *manes* of Tasso. He made the colours glaring, but such a subject is just the thing for him; the expression of tragic grandeur is his strong point. I did not know what to admire most in him, the composer or the pianist, for he played superbly. No, he does not really play—one forgets he is a musician, he becomes a prophet proclaiming the Last Judgment till all the spirits

* Grieg evidently did not know what a deadly sin he committed in asking Liszt to play. His most intimate friends, including the Princess von Wittgenstein, never dared to do that, and if any one else did it he almost invariably refused. His saying, "Ich bin nicht so," implies that he was willing, on this occasion, to make an exception to his rule, which in itself was an extraordinary compliment to the young Norwegian.

of the universe vibrate under his fingers. He enters into the most secret recesses of the mind and stirs one's inmost soul with demonic power.

"When this was done Liszt said jauntily, 'Now let us go on with the sonata,' to which I naturally retorted: 'No, thank you, after this I do not want to.' But now comes the best part of the story. Liszt exclaimed, 'Nun, warum nicht, geben Sie mal her, dann werde ich es thun.' ('Why not? Then give it me, I'll do it'.) Now you must bear in mind, in the first place, that he had never seen or heard the sonata, and in the second place that it was a sonata with a violin part, now above, now below, independent of the pianoforte part. And what does Liszt do? He plays the whole thing, root and branch, violin and piano, nay, more, for he played fuller, more broadly. The violin got its due right in the middle of the piano part. He was literally over the whole piano at once, without missing a note, and how he did play! With grandeur, beauty, genius, unique comprehension. I think I laughed—laughed like an idiot. And when I stammered a few complimentary words, he muttered: 'Nun, das werden Sie mir doch zutrauen, etwas vom Blatt zu spielen, ich bin ja ein alter gerwandter Musiker.' ('Surely you must expect me to be able to play a thing at sight, for I am an old experienced musician'.)

"Was not this geniality itself, from beginning to end? No other great man I have met is like him. In conclusion I played the Funeral March, which also was to his taste. Then I had a little talk with him, telling him among other things that my father had heard him in London in 1824, which pleased him ('Yes, yes, I have travelled and played much in the world—too much,' he said), took my leave, and walked homeward, feeling strangely hot in my head, but with the consciousness of having spent two of the most interesting hours in my life. I am invited for to-morrow, and am naturally very glad of it.

"The day after the first meeting just described, the Italians, Sgambati* and Pinelli (a pupil of Joachim), played my first violin sonata at a *matinée*, which was attended by all society. Liszt came in the middle of the concert, just before my sonata, and this was fortunate for me. The applause the sonata got I do not place to my credit. The fact is, that when Liszt applauds everybody applauds, each trying to outdo the others."

Grieg's second meeting with Liszt, which took place shortly after the above letter was written, was no less interesting than the first. It is thus described by him :

"I had fortunately just received the manuscript of my pianoforte concerto from Leipsic, and took it with me. Beside myself there were present Winding, Sgambati, and a German Lisztite, whose name I do not know, but who goes so far in the aping of his idol that he even wears the gown of an *abbé*; add to these a *Chevalier de Concilium*, and some young ladies of the kind that would like to eat Liszt, skin, hair, and all, their adulation is simply comical. . . . Winding and I were very anxious to see if he would really play my concerto at sight. I, for my part, considered it impossible; not so Liszt. 'Will you play?' he asked, and I made haste to reply: 'No, I cannot' (you know I have never practised it). Then Liszt took the manuscript, went to the piano, and said to the assembled guests, with his characteristic smile, 'Very well, then, I will show you that I also cannot.' With that he began. I admit that he took the first part of the concerto too fast, and the beginning consequently sounded helter-skelter; but later on, when I had a chance to indicate the tempo, he played as only he can play. It is significant that he played the *cadenza*, the most difficult part, best of all. His demeanour

* Sgambati, whose mother was an Englishwoman, was a special protégé, not only of Liszt, but of Wagner, on whose recommendation Schott published his chamber music and orchestral works. He was the first to produce Beethoven's "*Eroica*" symphony and Liszt's "*Dante*" symphony in Rome.

is worth any price to see. Not content with playing, he at the same time converses and makes comments, addressing a bright remark now to one, now to another of the assembled guests, nodding significantly to the right or left, particularly when something pleases him. In the adagio, and still more in the finale, he reached a climax both as to his playing and the praise he had to bestow.

"A really divine episode I must not forget. Toward the end of the finale the second theme is, as you may remember, repeated in a mighty fortissimo. In the very last measures, when in the first triplets the first tone is changed in the orchestra from G sharp to G, while the piano part, in a mighty scale passage, rushes wildly through the whole reach of the keyboard, he suddenly stopped, rose up to his full height, left the piano, and with big theatric strides and arms uplifted walked across the large cloister hall, at the same time literally roaring the theme. When he got to the g in question he stretched out his arms imperiously and exclaimed: 'G, G, not G sharp! Splendid! That is the real Swedish Banko!' to which he added very softly, as in a parenthesis: 'Smetana sent me a sample the other day.' He went back to the piano, repeated the whole strophe, and finished. In conclusion, he handed me the manuscript, and said, in a peculiarly cordial tone: 'Fahren Sie fort, ich sage Ihnen, Sie haben das Zeug dazu, und—lassen Sie sich nicht abschrecken!' ('Keep steadily on; I tell you, you have the capability, and—do not let them intimidate you!')

"This final admonition was of tremendous importance to me; there was something in it that seemed to give it an air of sanctification. At times, when disappointment and bitterness are in store for me, I shall recall his words, and the remembrance of that hour will have a wonderful power to uphold me in days of adversity."

On his return from Rome Grieg resided again at Christiania, resuming his former activity, and in the following year he founded the "Musical Society." In the conducting

of this he had a valuable coadjutor in Johan Svendsen,* who became his successor when he himself left the capital in 1874. Svendsen had given a concert at Christiania in 1867, of which Grieg had written an enthusiastic notice anonymously in one of the local newspapers. The two composers now became intimate friends, each benefiting by the other's criticism and sympathy. The Musical Society had choral works on its programmes, and as Grieg was also conductor of the Philharmonic Society, he thus had opportunity for acquiring a thorough familiarity with the master-works in diverse branches of music—a familiarity which, while it widened his horizon and sharpened his tools, did not in the least impair his originality, which grew apace with every successive work. Not a few of his compositions of the Christiania period were inspired by the writings of Bjørnstjerne Björnson, of whose friendly intercourse we have already had a delightful glimpse.

* Svendsen, who was three years older than Grieg, was a native of Christiania, and ranks as one of the leading Norwegian composers. Unlike Grieg, the bulk of whose work is for pianoforte and solo voice, he wrote chiefly chamber music and orchestral compositions; the latter belong to the genre of programme music, and there is more or less national colouring, notably in the four "Norwegian Rhapsodies" and the "Norse Carnival." To Svendsen Grieg dedicated his second violin sonata.

V

IBSEN AND "PEER GYNT"

THE rulers of Scandinavia have set a noble example to other countries by their treatment of native men of genius. In the year of Grieg's birth the Danish Government granted Gade a stipend which enabled him to continue his education at Leipsic, and subsequently he received one for life. Norway aided Svendsen and Grieg in the same way; in 1874 it was their good luck to be honoured and rewarded each with an annuity of 1600 crowns (about £88) a year for life. As a pound buys much more in Norway than in England, this was a larger sum than it may seem. It enabled Grieg to give up teaching and conducting, and to devote himself to composing and making his works known at home and abroad. So he left Christiania, after a sojourn of eight years, and returned for the time being to his native city, where he devoted himself to one of the most important tasks of his life—the writing of the music to "Peer Gynt," which brought him into close association with another of the remarkable group of great men produced in modern Norway—Henrik Ibsen.

If it is remarkable that a town of the size of Bergen should have given to the world so many notable men of genius—Holberg, the social reformer and founder of modern Danish literature; the poet Welhaven, the painter Dahl, the musicians Ole Bull and Grieg—it is even more remarkable that three of the most prominent literary and musical creators of the nineteenth century—Ibsen, Björnson,

Grieg—should hail Norway as their native country. To understand the full significance of this we must not look at the size of Norway (30,000 square miles), but at the number of its inhabitants (about 2,292,000). At the same ratio England ought to have about fifty, and the United States about a hundred, literary and musical creators of the same rank and fame—figures of which we fall short lamentably.

Henrik Ibsen, who has been almost as much abused and praised as Richard Wagner, first appears in our story of Grieg's life in January 1874. On the 23rd day of that month he wrote a letter from Dresden, which is so interesting that it must be cited here in full:—

“DEAR MR. GRIEG,

“I send you these lines because of a plan I wish to carry out, and in reference to which I want to ask whether you are willing to co-operate with me.

“The following is what I have in view. I intend to arrange ‘Peer Gynt’—of which a third edition is to appear soon—for performance on the stage. Will you write the required music? Let me tell you as briefly as possible how I project the structure of the play.

“The first act will be retained entire, with the exception of some of the dialogue. Peer Gynt's monologue on pages 23, 24, and 25 [224–227]* I should like to have treated either melodramatically or partly as recitative. The scene at the house where the wedding is celebrated [page 227] must be made, with the aid of the ballet, much more effective than it is in the book. For this it will be necessary to compose a special dance-melody, which is heard softly to the end of the act.

* Ibsen's references are to the Norwegian edition; the numbers in brackets refer to vol. iv. of the ten-volume German translation of Ibsen's works and letters. As English and American readers of this book are more likely to know German than Norwegian, I retain in the text only the numbers referring to the German version, on which mine is based.

"In the second act, the scene in which the three dairy-maids appear [pages 244-46], must be treated musically as the composer sees fit, but the devil must be at large in it! The monologue [pp. 246-8] I have conceived as being accompanied by harmonies, that is, as a melodrama. The same is true of the scene between Peer and the woman in green [pp. 248-50]. A sort of accompaniment must also be provided for the episodes in the hall of the Dovre king, in which, however, the dialogue is to be considerably curtailed. Also the scene with the hunchback, which is given entire, must have music. The bird-voices must be sung; chimes and a choir singing a choral are heard far away.

"In the third act I need harmonies—but sparsely—for the scene between Peer, the woman, and the *trolljunge* [pp. 272-75]. Likewise I have soft music in view for pages [281-84].

"Nearly all of the fourth act is to be omitted at the performance. In its place I have imagined a great musical tone-painting which suggests Peer Gynt's gadding about in the wide world; American, English and French melodies might appear therein, and recur as motives. The chorus of Anitra and the girls [pp. 308-9] is to be heard behind the curtain, sustained by orchestral music. Meanwhile the curtain rises and the spectators see, as in a dream, the tableau as described [p. 325], in which Solvejg, as a middle-aged woman, sits in the sunshine in front of the house and sings. After she has finished her song the curtain falls slowly, the music is continued by the orchestra and proceeds to portray the storm at sea with which the fifth act begins.

"The fifth act, which at the performance will be called the fourth or a postlude, must be considerably reduced. Beginning with pages [346-49], a musical accompaniment is called for. The scenes on the boat and in the cemetery will be omitted. Solvejg sings [p. 366] and the postlude accompanies the speech of Peer Gynt which follows,

after which it passes into the choruses [pp. 367-69]. The scenes with the button-maker and the Dovre king will be abbreviated. The churchgoers [p. 389] sing on their way through the woods. Chimes and distant choral song are suggested by the music as the action proceeds, until Solvejg's song concludes the piece; whereupon the curtain drops, while the choral again resounds nearer and louder.

"Such, approximately, is my plan, and I now beg you to let me know if you are willing to undertake this work. If you consent, I shall at once communicate with the director of the Christiania Theatre, give him a copy of the modified text, and ensure in advance a performance of the play. The royalty I shall insist on will be 400 *Speciesthaler*, to be divided between us in equal parts. I take it for granted that we can also count on performances of the play in Copenhagen and Stockholm. But I beg you to treat the matter for the present as a secret, and to let me have an answer as soon as possible.

"Your devoted friend,

"HENRIK IBSEN."

Here was something to kindle the ambition and fire the imagination of the thirty-one-year-old Grieg! He lost no time in accepting the tempting offer, and wrote for Ibsen's play a number of inspired pieces of music, which, subsequently grouped together as suites and played in concert halls, helped, perhaps more than any of his other works, to make him known the world over as an original and fascinating composer. We shall return to this music in a later chapter. In this place it will suffice to record that it was at Sandviken, near Bergen, that Grieg began the composition of this world-famed work, and that he completed the sketches in the following winter in town, and orchestrated them the following summer at Fredensborg, in Denmark. The first performance of "Peer Gynt" was given at the Christiania Theatre on February 24, 1876, just half a year

before the first Wagner Festival at Bayreuth. The plan had been somewhat modified, and the cuts were not entirely identical with those suggested in Ibsen's letter. The play proved a genuine success; it was given thirty-six times that year, and has been heard so far, as I am informed by Mr. Halvorsen, seventy times in Christiania, and many times also in the other Scandinavian cities. Considering that the poem is quite as fantastic and as untheatrical as the second part of Goethe's "Faust," this is certainly a remarkable record, for which Grieg's delightful music is largely responsible. Ibsen himself realised that it had been a hazardous undertaking to put this poem on the stage, and he confessed in a letter that the success had surpassed all his expectations, adding that he was also "cordially pleased to hear that there was but one opinion on this point in Christiania."

Grieg himself did not attend the first performance, as he was at the time in Bergen. He was told, however, that the orchestral effects were not well brought out ("dass die Klangwirkung sehr mittelmässig war"). "In the new National Theatre in Christiania," he writes, under date of July 30, 1905, "Ibsen's inspired work was taken into the repertory again a few years ago, and it always draws a full house. The music, which is played by the new orchestra, under the direction of our excellent conductor, Johan Halvorsen, now goes well, and as executed at present contributes materially to the success. If you had an opportunity to attend one of these representations you would discover that it requires the stage performance to clearly bring out the musical intentions. It is greatly to be regretted that the local colouring and the philosophical tone of much of the dialogue present a great obstacle to the success of Ibsen's work outside of Scandinavia. In Paris, where it was staged a few years ago, the music (played by the Lamoureux orchestra) had a colossal success, but Ibsen was not understood. In Berlin, last year, the work was simply a failure.

And yet I hold it to be Ibsen's greatest creation.* In the Fatherland it will always be considered a monument to him and keep its place on the stage, even as a folk-play (*Volksstück*)."

* In the preface to his translation of "Peer Gynt" (Reclam edition), L. Passarge says: "In Norway this poem is generally considered its author's most important work."

VI

GRIEG AT HOME—PERSONAL TRAITS— ANECDOTES

SOME months after "Peer Gynt" had its first hearing, Grieg again made Christiania his home. But the country always had a greater charm for him than any city, and from the spring of 1877 we find him domiciled for several years at the picturesque Lofthus, about half-way between Eide and Odde on the branch of the Hardanger Fjord known as the Sörfjord or South Fjord, which is doubly starred in Baedeker and of which this description is given: "The lofty rocky banks, from which a number of waterfalls descend, show that this fjord is of the nature of a huge chasm between the snow-clad Folgefond and the central Norwegian mountains to which it belongs. At places, particularly at the mouths of the torrents, alluvial deposits have formed fertile patches of land, where cherries and apples thrive luxuriantly, especially near the centre and northern parts of the fjord, where it is never frozen over. The banks are therefore comparatively well peopled, and the great charm of this fjord lies in the contrast between the smiling hamlets and the wild fjeld (mountains) towering above them.

Of Lofthus itself we get a pleasant glimpse in Sara Bull's biography of Ole Bull:

"The summer of 1879 was one of the happiest ever spent by the artist in Norway. One memorable day was when a party of friends went down to the little hamlet of Lofthus,

in the Hardanger, to be immortalised, as Ole Bull told the peasants, because the composer Grieg had chosen to stay there for months and to write some of his best works. They had now come to celebrate his birthday. No spot could be more enchanting, so wonderfully blended were the beautiful and the sublime in nature. The little study of one room, erected by the composer for perfect retirement, was perched halfway up a rock and near the fjord. In the field above, the apple trees were in bloom about an old farmhouse, where the guests assembled. From the summit of the beetling cliffs not far away fell a beautiful waterfall, while the opposite mountain shore of the broad fjord, clothed with heavy forests of pine above and the feathery birch below, presented range after range of lofty peaks and domes, crowned by the great Folgefond with its eternal snow. The day was as perfect as friendship, music, and lovely surroundings could make it."

Here Grieg spent several summers, and even winters, hard at work. From his first cottage he was, however, driven by the winter storms; his peasant neighbours helped him to haul it further down the slope. But this position, too, had its disadvantages. The Hardanger fjord is much frequented in summer, and the tourists had a habit of watching the composer from boats outside his windows. For this reason and others he left Lofthus in 1885, and built the elegant villa Trolldhaugen, which has been his home ever since. It is much less accessible to inquisitive tourists than Lofthus, being located some distance from the station of Hop, eight kilometres from Bergen. It was here that I had the first and only opportunity of meeting the great composer. It was on July 6, 1901, that we saw him. My wife's account of this visit, given in a letter home, being better than any I could write, follows:

"Yesterday we went to see Grieg and his charming wife, and had a most delightful little visit of about three hours. It seems to be our fate to have difficulties in finding



VIEW OF GRIEG'S HOUSE AT TROLDHAUGEN



TROLDHAUGEN, SHOWING GRIEG'S HOUSE

people, for yesterday the hotel porter sent us off on a train an hour later than Grieg had telephoned, and made us get off at the wrong station. We were twenty minutes late on a half-hour run. When we reached Nestun (we should have got off at Hop) there was no one at the station who could tell us where Grieg lived, or at least nobody who understood us ; when presently two young ladies, Norwegian girls with pleasant faces, asked us in excellent English if they could do anything for us. They told us we could easily walk to Grieg's house from that station, if we could find a boy to show us the way. One of them actually went in search of a boy. None could be found however, so, as the train was ready to return, we decided to go back as far as Hop (pronounced Hope). There the station-master spoke English, and sent us to Grieg's under the sole care of his sturdy boy of six, who walked and skipped up hill so fast (though he never missed the strawberries on the way) that I could hardly keep pace with him. He received a crown for his services, and left us at the gate with vociferous directions, in Norwegian, about the way to the door, I think, for he evidently suspected we had designs on the kitchen entrance, where a very neat maid, in national dress, answered 'Ja' to Henry's question as to the house being Grieg's.

"We had a glimpse of a pretty garden plot of roses, Iceland poppies, and other flowers, before we entered the glass-enclosed verandah, to be greeted by Mme. Grieg, who immediately won our hearts by her appearance and charm of manner. She is short and somewhat broad, with a face that her photographs do not do justice to, because there is a peculiar mixture of shyness and vivacity that eludes the camera ; she has grey hair, cut short, and very intelligent dark blue eyes. She received us with a fascinating smile and great cordiality, and told us Grieg would soon be in. When he arrived, poor man, he could scarcely speak, as he was suffering from an asthmatic

attack, but that soon wore off, and he and Henry chatted away in German like two old friends. He speaks English some, but not so much as his wife, who speaks it well, although she says she doesn't. Her sister, who resembles her quite strongly, makes up the rest of the household. Grieg calls her his 'second wife,' and I could see they were a most united family. He is short and frail looking. His back is somewhat bent, from asthma, I suppose, and he has such delicate, nervous, thin little hands, so bloodless, that they worried me until he touched the piano, when I saw that appearances were deceptive. They are wonderful hands, and his touch has the luscious quality of Paderewski's, more than any other pianist we have heard. Like his friend Björnson, he takes a good picture; we would have recognised him instantly had we met him in a crowd. His face is as individual, as unique, as attractive, as his music; it is the face of a thinker, a genius. His eyes are keen and blue; his hair is long, straight, and almost white, and brushed over backwards, like Liszt's.

"It seems to us that the neighbourhood of Bergen is not at all the place for him to live, for it rains a great deal here, and it is usually either damp and cold or damp and warm—a bad thing for one who is not robust. Norway presents curious climatic contrasts, even in places not very far apart, like Bergen and Christiania. Our guide-book says regarding Bergen that the climate is exceedingly mild and humid, resembling that of the west coast of Scotland. The frosts of winter are usually slight and of short duration, the thermometer very rarely falling below 15–20° Fahr., and the average rainfall is 72 inches (in the Nordfjord about 35 inches, at Christiania 26 inches only). There are good reasons, to be sure, why the Griegs should be attached to their villa. It is beautifully situated on an inner branch of the fjord, which here looks like a lake, and has several islands dotting its surface. It must be lovely here in sunny weather—yesterday it was persistently cloudy

—but depressing, I should think, the rest of the time, especially in the long dark winters. Henry urged him to move to a dryer spot, and he replied that he had long thought he would go and live in the mountains near Christiania ; that he had just about decided to do so, in fact.

“They were astonished to hear how long we had been married, so I thought it might interest them if I told them my age. That pleased Grieg. He said he liked the way American women had of not objecting to telling their age. We took supper with them, and then, after a little while, he played and she sang, but ‘not for the critic’ he told Henry, for his wife doesn’t sing any more except at home. Some years ago she did much to make his songs famous. Her voice is no longer fresh and young, but one forgets that in the magic of her singing, it is so wonderfully shaded and phrased, so full of feeling and sympathy. It fairly made the chills run over me. She sings the pathetic songs beautifully, but still better are the dramatic ones, or those which are gay and full of the ‘national colour,’ although what is usually called so is really his own interpretation of his land, not anything he gets from others.

“In many ways Edvard Grieg reminded us of *our* Edward [MacDowell]. Like him, he has his little work cabin away from the house, down a steep path, and among the trees in the garden. Some manuscripts were lying on the table, and Grieg talked with Henry about his work, and Wagner, and Bayreuth, and Liszt, and many other topics. Among other things, he spoke of the losses which he and Ibsen and other Norwegians suffered because Norway did not enjoy the benefits of the international copyright law. From France, however, he had had some income since he joined the Society of Dramatic Authors, which collects fees for public performances ; at the end of the year he was surprised on receiving a cheque for 1200 francs. Both the Griegs had many questions to ask about America and

Americans, especially the MacDowells, to whom they sent the kindest messages.

"When we left them, at about ten, it was still very light. They laughed when I said I always thought it was four o'clock, the sun misled me so about time. We were glad that we had not reached them by an earlier train, for three hours of talking must have been quite enough for Grieg, and if we had been there longer he might have had reason to regret our visit. He said good-bye to us at the door, while she and her sister went as far as the gate with us. I told her how well we knew and loved her husband's songs and piano pieces, and how often we played and sang them. He will probably never come to America, although he has had many tempting offers. His health would not permit. He dislikes even the trip to England, so wretched is he on the sea. He told us he could stand the sea-sickness for a day, but not for a week or more. Bergen is really dreadfully out of the world, for either you have to take the disagreeable journey by sea, or the long one we took overland by wagon.

"I must add a few words about the supper we had, a real Norwegian supper of delicious little fried cod, smoked tongue, peas, cold things, and cheese, wine and beer. Grieg takes tea, as he said, "weak at night, for I must have some sleep, but strong in the morning." The maid served things once, while Madame Grieg looked after everything afterwards, jumping up to get things, and acting so glad when we enjoyed her little cods. Grieg made me smell a cheese, a favourite national dish, which he said tasted good but smelled very bad. I didn't find it so, but thought it tasted like dried condensed milk. We were speaking of national food peculiarities, and I said in America we didn't have time to learn to eat and like good things. Grieg seemed very much amused at this, repeating it and saying 'That's good!'

"He told us some interesting things about the first



TROLDHAWGEN

Bayreuth Festival. Hans Richter refused him permission to sit in the orchestra at rehearsals, but in such a way that Grieg said: 'What if I should come without permission?' 'Oh, of course, I couldn't help that,' retorted Richter; so he attended, and Richter afterwards told him he was glad he had come. At the final rehearsal for the 'Ring,' Grieg said it was droll to hear Wagner with a stentorian tone like Fafner give the signal for everything to begin—for his life's dream to unfold. The King of Bavaria was there, and Grieg and others had been admitted on condition that they would sit in the dark, still as mice, and not make any disturbance trying to see the King; but when they heard a noise they did get up, whereat Wagner came to the edge of his box and scolded them all roundly. But they all made allowances, for Wagner was naturally nervous and overwrought."

To the eminent American composer and conductor, Mr. Frank Van der Stucken, I am indebted for the following interesting reminiscences of Grieg, written especially for this volume. They are the more valuable as so little regarding the great Norwegian's personality has so far got into print, notwithstanding the universal interest in his works; a fact due partly to his retiring disposition, partly to the remoteness of his residence: *

"When I first came to Leipsic, in 1878, my whole musical luggage consisted of a set of songs published that year. As a stranger in a strange country, my only desire to get some recognition was to send complimentary copies

* Mr. Van der Stucken was born in Texas in 1848. He received his musical education at Antwerp and in German cities, including Weimar, where Liszt at once recognised his gifts as composer. In 1884 he became conductor of the Arion in New York; since 1895 he has been at the head of the orchestra and Conservatory at Cincinnati. Beside songs and pianoforte pieces he has written an opera, "Vlasda," music to "The Tempest," a "Ratcliff" overture, a "Te Deum," and other vocal and orchestral works. His compositions are characterised by the same lively temperament that makes him so interesting as a conductor.

to the musical periodicals and to the prominent musicians who lived in Leipsic at that time. One morning, after breakfast, I was sitting in my lonesome den in the Poststrasse at work on a new song, when a rap at the door announced my first visitor ; and presently a little gentleman, with flowing blonde locks, with friendly and bright blue eyes, walked towards me and introduced himself as the Norwegian composer Grieg, who wanted to make the acquaintance of the young musician, whose first compositions he had received and read with great interest. Ever since that hour our friendship was sealed, and scarcely a day passed during Grieg's stay in Leipsic that we were not found together, either at dinner, supper, or some musical or dramatic performance. Through him I was introduced to the artistic life of Leipsic, and more especially to his Scandinavian friends, Sinding, Kajanus, Holter, Olsen, and others. Grieg was fond of cards, and after lunch we used to spend one hour at the Café Français playing whist. He was a very lively comrade in good company, and liked to tell and to hear a good square jest ; but when we were alone, the keynote of his character was a gentle melancholy resignation, tempered by witty satire and weird phantasy. He was rather a 'gourmet,' and even a 'gourmand.' A fine portion of oysters, caviare, or Norwegian snow-hen, with a glass of good old wine, could excite and cheer him up wonderfully. One day we lingered before the shop window of a renowned *delicatessen* store, when he—armed with his inseparable gloves, umbrella, and galoshes—exclaimed, enthusiastically : 'What an ideal symphony ! How perfect in all its details, in form, contents, and instrumentation !'

"His favourite modern composers were, then, Chopin, Schumann and Wagner. He also spoke in the highest terms about his countrymen, the composers Svendsen and Nordraak, and the celebrated authors, Ibsen and Björnson, the friends of his youth and manhood, who had such a

decisive influence on his career. In music as in literature, Grieg also had a great penchant for the French masters, because they express so clearly whatever they have to say. He always was a Republican at heart, and spoke about Norway's absolute independence as long as I knew him—citing Björnson as sharing his opinions.* I am sure that he now rejoices greatly about the present turn of affairs in Scandinavia.

“With all that, he liked and was liked by the Danish royal family. Princess Thyra, one of King Christian's daughters, invited him several times to play the piano for and with her. At a time when Grieg concertised in several German towns, he was invited by the reigning duke of a smaller State to visit him. In the course of the conversation the duke presented Grieg with a badge of one of the orders. The composer simply said ‘Thank you,’ and, continuing the conversation where it had been left off, proceeded quietly to put the decoration in one of the rear pockets of his dress coat. The duchess, who was present, saved the somewhat awkward situation with great tact. She came to Grieg and smilingly said, ‘My dear Mr. Grieg, let me show you how such a badge should be worn,’ and fastened the decoration with her own hands on the lapel of his coat.

“In reference to the Danish Court, Grieg liked to tell a story about his countryman, Ole Bull. The handsome violinist had just returned from a triumphal tour in Spain, where the impressionable Queen Isabella had favoured him with her good graces and the badge of her order *pour la vertu*. Piquant reports had reached Stockholm, and when Ole Bull shortly afterwards played at a Court concert, the Queen Desideria

* The eminent Danish author, Georg Brandes, remarks, in a private letter to the writer of this volume: “I have had some personal acquaintance with Grieg, and have talked with him on several occasions, but our conversations were not about music, but about political and national topics. You know that he is an ardent Norwegian. He has always stood by the left; during the Dreyfus affair he refused to play in France.”

asked him, with a roguish twinkle in her eye, on what account Queen Isabella had given him his new decoration. The *virtuoso* made a graceful bow, and modestly answered, 'On account of my virtue, your highness!'

"Grieg's piano concerto in A minor proved to be the means to gain Liszt's protection. While Liszt admired the originality of the music, he suggested several alterations in the instrumentation. The composer, who at that time was rather doubtful about his orchestral knowledge, accepted these suggestions, and the score was published accordingly. But on this occasion Liszt had made the mistake of following his own fiery temperament instead of considering Grieg's more idyllic nature, and so the scoring turned out to be too heavy for its poetical contents. Later on Grieg published a revised edition of the concerto, in which he partly reverted to his first simpler and more appropriate scoring. A single example shows plainly the difference of the two versions: the beautiful second theme of the first movement was given by Grieg to the 'cellos, quite in keeping with the tender *cantabile* character of the melody; Liszt suggested the trumpet, and at once introduced a theatrical tinge that never existed in Grieg's make up. For many a day the manuscript of this concerto had remained in the hands of Carl Reinecke, for Grieg wanted to know his former teacher's opinion of his work. After waiting in vain for a note on the subject, he called on Reinecke to get the score, and was received most cordially. The conversation touched all possible topics, but the concerto was *never mentioned*. So the Norwegian walked home with the score under his arm and some fierce motive in his raging soul. Grieg, like Wagner, was very sensitive to adverse criticism, and I remember his highly-coloured expressions about some musical journalists of the day.

"In the summer of 1883, Grieg came to live near me in Rudolstadt, a beautiful town in Thuringia. He expected to go to Paris in the winter, and I was to help him to

Hop. fr. Bergen, Norwegen
14/6/1901

Hochzuverehrender Herr!

Wenn nichts Unerwartetes
passiert, werde ich jedenfalls in
der ersten Juliwoche zu Hause sein
und es wird mir eine Freude sein
Sie und Ihre Frau Gemahlin begrüßen
zu können. Ihr sehr ergebener

Erhard Grieg

FACSIMILE OF AN INVITATION (POST CARD)

master the French language. It was a most delightful period in our lives. He lived in a very 'gemüthliches' out-of-town hotel, while I had rented a modest villa belonging to the same concern for my small family. In the morning we worked separately at our own affairs, and in the afternoon I ordinarily met him in the Morla Graben, a beautiful vale near by. There I often found him lying on his back in the shade of a tree, dreamingly gazing at the sky, while his hand reposed on the grass, holding an open French book. Our French lessons never lasted very long, for they invariably passed into musical discussions. After supper we walked about town or country, with my wife and child. He was very fond of my little daughter Greta, and 'Uncle' Grieg was quite a favourite of hers. He liked children very much, and used to speak about a child of his, a girl that had died very young. How tenderly he would mention her name and relate incidents of her short life! In Rudolstadt I translated several of Grieg's songs, and "At the Cloister Gate" into French, and added a second German verse to the celebrated song 'Ich liebe dich,' for Peters in Leipsic.

"On Grieg's instigation I visited Liszt in Weimar, and thus owe him all my subsequent career, for a concert of my own compositions given under Liszt's auspices in November 1883 called the attention of the press to my name. Grieg was present at my concert, and we also met at two interesting entertainments given by Liszt, who was very kind to me during my stay in Weimar.

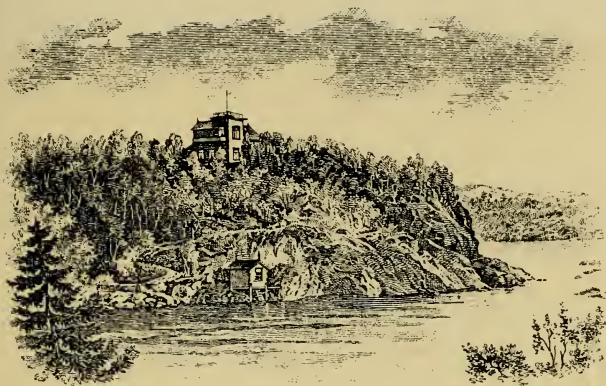
"As a performer, Grieg is the most original pianist I ever heard. Though his technique suffered somewhat from the fact that a heavy wagon crushed one of his hands and that he lost the use of one of his lungs in his younger days, he has a way of performing his compositions that is simply unique. While it lacks the breadth that the professional virtuoso infuses in his works, he offsets this by a most poetic conception of lyric parts and a wonderfully

crisp and buoyant execution of the rhythmical passages. I heard him play the concerto and the different violin sonatas. Of the latter he seems to like the second (Opus 13) the best. I also heard him perform his 'Ballade' in G minor, a composition that he wrote with his 'heart's blood in days of sadness and despair.' There is no doubt that this beautiful composition is his favourite work, and I believe that all deeper-minded musicians agree with him.

"As a conductor, he manages to get out of any orchestra what he wants for a good presentation of his works. Before his appearance as performer or conductor he used to be rather nervous and concerned about the results. When he came to see me at my lodgings in Weimar on the evening of my concert and noticed that I was gaily humming a tune while I dressed for the ordeal, he turned to Mrs. van der Stucken and said: 'How can any one be so calm at such a time? I would give anything to have such a disposition.'"

So far Mr. Van der Stucken. Of Grieg's agitation about a concert, just hinted at, Ernest Closson gives a vivid illustration in his brochure.* "He put into his playing so much soul, so much emotional intensity, that he came back into the artists' room completely exhausted. The illness which weakens his strength makes it impossible for him to endure the fatiguing tasks of virtuosoship, especially that of giving a whole concert without assisting artists. The depression he felt brought on an extraordinary state of nervous excitement, and he paced the room feverishly, paying no further attention to anything going on about him, merely fixing, from time to time, on one or another, his childlike gaze, gentle and kind, in which one could read something like anguish. And in a feeble voice he kept repeating feverishly, in German, the words: 'No! A

* "Edvard Grieg et la Musique Scandinave." Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1892. P. 32.



VILLA TROLDHAWGEN AND GRIEG'S STUDIO



GRIEG'S SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY

whole concert ! It is too much—too much—I cannot !—I cannot !' ”

In his pen-and-ink portrait of Grieg the same writer refers particularly to his eyes—“eyes superb, green, grey, in which one seems to catch a glimpse of Norway, its melancholy fjords and its luminous mists. His gaze is serious, indescribably tender, with a peculiar expression, at once ailing, restless, and childishy naive. The entire effect is that of kindness, gentleness, sincerity and genuine modesty. . . . He has remained what he always was—a man who detests clamour, abhors the hubbub of ovations, the triumphs of vogue and celebrity.”

When Tchaikovsky first met Grieg he wrote * that even before he knew who he was, his exterior at once attracted his sympathy: “he had an uncommon charm, and blue eyes, not very large, but irresistibly fascinating, recalling the glance of a charming and candid child. I rejoiced in the depths of my heart when we were mutually introduced to each other, and it turned out that this personality, which was so inexplicably sympathetic to me, belonged to a musician whose warmly emotional music had long ago won my heart.” He concludes his remarks on Grieg and his music with the exclamation that “it is not surprising that every one should delight in Grieg, that he should be popular everywhere—in Paris, London, and Moscow—that his name should appear in all concert programmes, and that visitors to Bergen should deem it a pleasant duty to make a pilgrimage to the charming though remote haven among the rocks of the shore, where Grieg retires to work and where he spends most of his life.”

To Mr. Christian Schiött I am indebted for the following amusing anecdote. One day, at Bergen, Grieg went out fishing in a small boat with his friend Frants Beyer. After

* “Diary of My Tour in 1888,” embodied in Rosa Newmarch’s “Tchaikovsky, His Life and Works.” John Lane, 1900. Pp. 191-193.

a while a musical theme suddenly came into his head. He took a piece of paper from his pocket, quietly jotted it down, and put the paper on the bench at his side. A moment later a gust of wind blew it overboard. Grieg did not see it, but Beyer saw it and picked it up. Being himself something of a composer he read the melody and, after putting the paper in his pocket, whistled it. Grieg turned like a flash and asked: "What was that?" Beyer answered nonchalantly, "Only an idea I just got," whereupon Grieg retorted: "The devil you say! I just got that same idea myself!"

One of the anecdotes related by Mr. Van der Stucken illustrates Grieg's indifference to badges and orders. He has received many of these, but never wears any of them. He is proud, on the other hand, of the honours conferred on him by institutions of art and learning. In 1872 he was appointed a member of the Swedish Academy of Music; in 1883, corresponding member of the Musical Academy at Leyden; in 1890, of the French Academy of Fine Arts. In 1893 the University of Cambridge conferred on him the honorary degree of Mus. Doc. The occasion was a most interesting one, for Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saëns, Max Bruch, and Boïto also had degrees conferred on them on the same date, and assisted at the musical performances. Unfortunately, Grieg's state of health did not allow him to be present.

VII

CONDUCTOR AND PIANIST—DREYFUS INCIDENT —NINA GRIEG

DESPITE the drawback of permanently impaired health, Grieg had succeeded by the year 1880 in establishing his fame in all musical cities as a composer, and in many also as a conductor and a pianist. At Bergen, during the seasons of 1880 to 1882, he conducted the "Harmonien." He was interested in these concerts, although his orchestra was, of course, not of the best. Sometimes he visited the members and taught them how to play their parts. With increasing frequency, from this time on, he left his native country to give concerts in England, France, and Germany. Detailed accounts of these cannot be expected in a short monograph like this, but room must be made for a few samples.

In a letter dated August 30, 1888, Sir George Grove said, in speaking of the Birmingham Festival : *

" A very interesting thing was Grieg's overture last night, and his conducting of it. How he managed to inspire the band as he did and get such nervous thrilling bursts and such charming sentiment out of them I don't know. He looks very like Beethoven in face, I thought, and though he is not so extravagant in his ways of conducting, yet it is not unlike." A week before this date he had written in

* "Life and Letters of Sir George Grove," by C. L. Graves. Macmillan, 1903. P. 337.

his pocket-book, under the heading "Beethoven:" "Such men cannot be judged by the standard of ordinary men—of Englishmen particularly. They are free from conventions which bind us, they are all nerves, they indulge in strange gestures and utter odd noises and say strange words, and make every one laugh till we find that the gestures and looks and words are the absolute expression of their inmost feeling, and that that inmost feeling is inherent in the music and must be expressed in the performance. And they get what they want. Those who have seen Grieg conduct will know what I am attempting to describe."

On May 3 of the same year the Philharmonic Society of London devoted nearly its entire programme to Grieg, who was present in the threefold capacity of composer, conductor, and pianist. Concerning his playing of his pianoforte concerto the *Times* said: "Mr. Grieg played his own concerto in A minor after his own manner. The French speak of a *voix de compositeur*; in the same sense there is a composer's touch on the piano, which, when applied to the composer's own works, gives them a peculiar charm of their own. . . . Grieg's rendering of the familiar work was a revelation, although it would be unjust to forget that Mr. Edward Dannreuther, who introduced the concerto many years ago, invested it with the rarest poetic charm. . . . The concerto is one of the most beautiful specimens of its kind. . . . The dreamy charm of the opening movement, the long-drawn sweetness of the adagio, reminding one of Tennyson's 'Dark and true and tender is the North,' the graceful fairy music of the final allegro—all this went straight to the hearts of the audience. Grieg, at least, will have no reason to complain of the passive attitude toward modern music generally attributed to English, and more especially Philharmonic audiences."

The *Musical Times* said concerning the same performance: "Nothing could be more neat, clear, and intelligent

than his rendering of the solo. In it the artist predominated over the mere executant, and the audience were held closely observant by what seemed to be, in Grieg's hands, a new work. The success gained was immense, while its causes were the most legitimate conceivable. Grieg, as a conductor, gave equal satisfaction. The little pieces styled 'Elegiac Melodies' acquired a significance under his direction such as had not been suspected previously, and the performance—a triumph of delicacy and refinement—left absolutely nothing to desire. Of the applause showered upon the Norwegian musician it would be vain to speak in attempt at description. Grieg, though personally a stranger, seemed intimately known to the audience, and appeared to have all their sympathy. This was no doubt due to the charm of the songs and pianoforte pieces which long since made his name a household word. It is now to be hoped that the greatest musical representative of 'old Norway' will come amongst us every year."

He did return, the following year, when he again appeared at a Philharmonic concert (March 14, 1889). Concerning this, the same periodical remarks: "The hero of the evening was unquestionably Mr. Grieg, the heroine being Mr. Grieg's wife, who sang, in her own unique and most artistic fashion, a selection from her husband's songs, he accompanying with such delicacy and poetic feeling as drew almost an unfair measure of attention to the pianoforte. The Norwegian master further conducted a performance of his Suite in four movements, made up from incidental music to Ibsen's 'Peer Gynt,' and called by the name of that drama. Amateurs will have in mind that this Suite was introduced at the London Symphony Concerts last November, but then heard under the disadvantage of no key to the meaning of the music and apart from the composer's supervision. Under Mr. Grieg's direction, helped by general knowledge of the

dramatic significance of the various numbers, the work appeared at its best, making a genuine 'sensation.' The performance was most masterly, the splendid Philharmonic orchestra seconding the composer-conductor to a marvel. No more striking and picturesque effects have been produced in our concert-rooms for a long time."

How completely Grieg won the hearts of English music-lovers is indicated by the following, which I find among my newspaper clippings, undated: "Grieg is so popular in London, both as composer and pianist, that when he gave his last concert people were waiting in the street before the doors from eleven o'clock in the morning, quite as in the old Rubinstein days."*

In Paris he enjoyed the same favour. As a writer in *Le Figaro* (1893) remarked:

"Among the most famous living musicians there is none I know of whose popularity equals, with us, that of M. Grieg; none whose works have entered into our inmost musical life in the same degree as have his compositions, which are so full of simple charm, so fine, strange, ever individual, and, for the most part, of a comparative ease of execution which makes them accessible to the lesser talents, and has greatly aided their coming into vogue."

It was in Paris that the most exciting episode in Grieg's life occurred. At the time of the Dreyfus trial it happened that the eminent orchestral conductor, Edouard Colonne, invited him to participate in a concert at the Châtelet Theatre. Grieg, however, like many other patriots the world over, was so indignant at the verdict in this case that he refused the invitation, in a letter which got into print, and which enraged the nationalists. The letter,

* A vote as to popular pieces, taken in connection with a series of concerts in Glasgow some years ago yielded the highest number of ballots for Tchaikovsky's "Pathetic Symphony"; next came Schubert's "Unfinished," then Beethoven's "Pastoral," Grieg's "Peer Gynt" Suite, and Beethoven's C minor symphony.

dated Aulestad, near Christiania, September 12, 1899, is herewith given in an English version :

“DEAR MASTER,

“While thanking you very much for your kind invitation, I regret to say that after the issue of the Dreyfus trial I cannot make up my mind, at this moment, to come to France. Like all who are not French (*tout l'étranger*) I am indignant at the contempt for justice shown in your country, and therefore unable to enter into relations with the French public. Pardon me if I cannot feel differently, and I beg you to try to understand me. My wife and I send you our best remembrance.”

In reply to this letter M. Colonne wrote, under date of September 30 :

“MY DEAR MASTER,

“The letter you addressed to me under the sway of emotion on the day after the trial at Rennes has certainly outstripped your thoughts. No, my dear Master, France has not ceased to be the land of liberty, justice, and right. With us, as elsewhere, political and religious feelings are strong; they often poison or turn aside commonweal questions. But these are transient crises, after which we recover ourselves always, and become again, what the world has become accustomed to see in us, the France of equality and justice, the France of 1789. That, my dear Master, is what you forgot in publishing your letter, and your friends, who are numerous here, hope that you already regret having written it. It is in this hope that I send you, my dear Master, the assurance of my best regards.”

Grieg replied to this, under date of October 4, in an autograph French letter : *

* The two preceding letters were printed in *Le Figaro* of October 4, 1899. For authentic copies of them, and for the following letter,

“MY DEAR MASTER,

“Allow me to thank you for the charming and noble manner in which you referred to my answer to your kind invitation, and I beg you to be so good as to hear me a few moments more concerning the affair.

“The French translator of my answer to you asked my permission to print it in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. In the indignation of the moment (it was just after the verdict in the trial at Rennes) I consented. There is only one point of view from which I regret this, namely, the thought of having possibly hurt your feelings in neglecting to first get your consent, which would deeply mortify me. But I hope you can readily understand the situation. In writing my answer I was in the country, in the hospitable home of the poet Björnson, whose whole family, like my wife and myself, are Dreyfusards. In this way, the whole thing followed naturally. I remember having asked the German translator, who was present, ‘Do you believe, really, that any good will result from the printing of the letter?’ and that he and others answered, ‘Yes, undoubtedly!’

“I wish I could show you all the abominable letters I receive daily from your country. To me they are solely tokens of a bad conscience, and additional proofs of the innocence of the unhappy Dreyfus. Yesterday I received from M. Henri Rochefort his ‘noble’ journal, the *Intransigeant*, addressed to the ‘Jewish musical composer, Ed. Grieg.’ There! I am proud of it! ‘Hurrah for Mendelssohn!’ One of the letters from Paris threatens ‘de me recevoir dans votre ville par coups de pied dans la partie la moins noble de mon individu’ if I dare to come there. However, I believe that the easily aroused passion of the French nation will soon be replaced by a saner attitude, resembling the rights of mankind proclaimed by which has not yet been printed, I am indebted to the kindness of M. Colonne; also for the programme of the concert of April 19, 1903.

the République française in 1789. I hope, primarily for France, but also for my own sake, that I may be able once more to see your beautiful country."

This opportunity came in 1903, when Colonne renewed his invitation, and Grieg accepted it. His opponents also saw their opportunity. As soon as his date was announced they began to stir up feeling against him, demanding that "the insulter of France should be shown the door." At the opening hour of the concert the Châtelet Theatre was crowded as it had never been, and hundreds were at the door unable to secure admission. Apparently those inside were all friends, for when Grieg appeared at the conductor's desk he was received with thunders of applause, lasting several minutes. When that subsided, however, the opponents made themselves heard with penny whistles, stamping of the feet, and cries of "Apologise, you have insulted France." While Grieg stood calmly waiting for the tumult to subside, the majority of the audience protested vigorously against the disturbance and renewed the applause. Before it had subsided Grieg gave the sign for the beginning of his overture "In the Autumn." At its conclusion there was an ovation for him, mingled with hisses. Presently a man got up in the parquet and shouted, "We applaud only the artist and great musician." *

In a private letter, printed by Schjelderup, Grieg referred amusingly to this concert: "I have in my old days succeeded at last in getting hissed. I have seen much, but never such a comedy as that in the Châtelet Theatre on the nineteenth. But, who can tell, if I had not been hissed I would perhaps not have had such an enormous success. The press was

* At this historic concert Frau Gulbranson sang three of Grieg's songs, including "The Swan," which she had to repeat. With the composer at the conductor's desk, Raoul Pugno won a triumphant success with Grieg's concerto, of which he is the most poetic interpreter. Greatly appreciated also were "At the Cloister Gate" (especially the choruses of nuns), and the "Peer Gynt" selections, conducted by Grieg himself.

CONCERTS-COLONNE

THEATRE DU CHATELET

Dimanche 19 Avril 1903, a 2 h. 1/4

(Vingt-Quatrième et dernier Concert de l'abonnement)

SOUS LA DIRECTION DE M.

EDVARD GRIEG

AVEC LE CONCOURS DE M^{me}

ELLEN GULBRANSON

du Théâtre de Bayreuth

ET DE M.

RAOUL PUGNO

EN AUTOMNE, Ouverture de concert, op. 11 ED. GRIEG.
(1^{re} Audition).

TROIS ROMANCES avec accompagnement d'orchestre.. ED. GRIEG.

a) Berceuse de Solveig (IBSEN).

b) De Monte-Pincio (BJORNSEN).

c) Un Cygne (IBSEN).

M^{me} ELLEN GULBRANSON.

CONCERTO EN LA MINEUR pour piano, op. 16 ... ED. GRIEG.

I. *Allegro moderato*.

II. *Adagio*.

III. *Allegro, presto, maestoso*.

M. Raoul PUGNO

DEUX MELODIES ELEGIAQUES ED. GRIEG.

Pour instruments à cordes.

D'après des poésies norvégiennes de A. O. VINJE.

a) Blessures au cœur.

b) Dernier printemps.

A LA PORTE DU CLOITRE (1^{re} Audition) ED. GRIEG.

Poème de Bjornson pour soprano et alto soli,

Chœur de femmes, orchestre et orgue (op. 20)

M^{me} ELLEN GULBRANSON.

M^{lle} CLAMOUS.

Chœur de Nonnes.

PEER GYNT, 1^{re} suite d'Orchestre (Op. 46)..... ED. GRIEG.

Musique pour le poème dramatique de IBSEN.

I. Le matin.

II. La mort d'Aase.

III. La danse d'Anitra.

IV. Chez le Roi des Montagnes (*Les Kobolds poursuivent Peer Gynt*)

Sous la direction de M. Ed. GRIEG.

LE CREPUSCULE DES DIEUX..... R. WAGNER.

Scene finale (*Mort de Brunnhilde*).

Brunnhilde: M^{me} ELLEN GULBRANSON,

Sous la direction de M. L. LAPORTE.

PIANO PLEYEL

CE PROGRAMME EST DISTRIBUE GRATUITEMENT

Prière de ne pas entrer ni sortir pendant l'exécution des morceaux.

furious over this success. Think of it, when I was about to enter my carriage there was a triple cordon around it. I felt myself as important as Cromwell—at the very least.”

Referring to an earlier concert given by Grieg in Paris (December 8, 1889) Closson says that his gestures at the conductor's desk were free from exaggeration, and that he was master of himself as well as of the orchestral players. As a special characteristic he notes “a tendency to make both the arms simultaneously execute the same gesture.”

“Doesn't he look like a lion shaking his mane?” a lady was overheard saying during a concert given by Grieg in Vienna in 1896. In January of the following year he again appeared in that city, and the correspondent of the *New York Musical Courier* wrote: “When a student said to a woman who unfortunately missed the Grieg concert last year, ‘Well, you missed just half your life!’ he uttered more of a truth perhaps than he knew. Grieg is a veritable Orpheus on the piano. To say that he charms is true in every sense of the word . . . there is something supernatural, something ethereal, in his touch and style . . . What enhanced the charm of his playing was that he wisely chose those compositions for his programme which are well-known favourites, most of them from the ‘*Lyrische Stücke*,’ Vol. III.: ‘*In der Heimat*’; ‘*Schmetterling*’; ‘*Einsamer Wanderer*’; ‘*Vöglein*’; ‘*Erotik*’; ‘*An den Frühling*,’ &c. All of these he played with the utmost delicacy and a rare sympathy of touch of softer, finer quality than has ever been my good fortune to hear. In contrast to this was the remarkably strong manner in which he brought out all that was ‘characteristic’ in each selection—that which only the composer knows so much better than any other hand how best to do. I noticed especially the easy clearness of his left-hand work, particularly in melody. I have never heard any one, for instance, play the left-hand response in the ‘*Erotik*’ as he did. It gave the whole piece a character

which it had never assumed before. Of course there were numerous encores, bravos, cheers *ad infinitum*.”*

The climax of enthusiasm over Grieg as a player, conductor, and composer is naturally reached in the Scandinavian cities. At Stockholm, for instance, in the spring of 1904, he announced two concerts, but the interest aroused by them was so great that he had to add another, and still another, and then he stopped simply because he did not feel strong enough for further efforts.

At some of his concerts Grieg had a most potent ally in his wife. Let us hear first what Tchaikovsky had to say about her (in the “Diary of My Tour in 1888,” previously referred to) :

“ Together with Grieg, there entered the room where we were assembled, a lady who was growing slightly grey and resembled him very closely, being just as small, fragile, and sympathetic. She was his wife, and also his cousin, which accounts for their resemblance. Subsequently I was able to appreciate the many and precious qualities possessed by Madame Grieg. In the first place she proved to be an excellent, though not very finished singer ; secondly, I have never met a better-informed or more highly-cultivated woman, and she is, among other things, an excellent judge of our literature, in which Grieg himself was also deeply interested ; thirdly, I was soon convinced that Madame Grieg was as amiable, as gentle, as childishly simple and without guile as her celebrated husband.”†

In an article on “ Edvard Grieg and his Wife,” which

* After this another concert was given, at which Busoni played the A minor concerto, and Grieg conducted the “ Autumn ” overture the “ Holberg ” suite, and “ At the Cloister Gate.”

† Tchaikovsky's letters of the years 1887 and 1888 contain several other expressions of delight over Grieg, his wife, and his music. Under date of January 20, 1888, he writes: “ At Brodsky's there was a soirée, at which a new sonata by Grieg enchanted me. Grieg and his wife are so droll, sympathetic, interesting and original, that it is impossible to give an idea of them in a letter.” See *Modeste Tchaikovsky's Life and Letters of his brother*, edited by Rosa Newmarch (John Lane).



MR. AND MRS. GRIEG, LONDON, 1888
(From a photograph by Messrs. C. E. Fry & Son)

appeared in the now defunct *Looker-On* (New York) some years ago, Mr. Joakim Reinhard said that while "nothing were easier than to criticise Mrs. Grieg's singing . . . yet no singing ever made such impression on me as hers, and, as far as I know, all that have been fortunate enough to hear her confess to a similar conviction. . . . As soon as Mrs. Grieg has been singing but for a few moments we forget that we are in a concert-hall listening to a pre-arranged performance. We suffer with this woman, cry, laugh, are jubilant, until at last all is over, and we go home, suddenly recalling, or being reminded by some more cold-blooded individual, that in the first three or four bars of such and such a song Mrs. Grieg made such and such mistakes. It is a strange fact, but it is an incontrovertible one, that nobody ever observed any errors in the latter part of Mrs. Grieg's songs. Probably there never were any."

Only a few cities were favoured with song recitals by Edvard and Nina Grieg—Christiania, Copenhagen, Leipsic, Rome, Paris, and London. They were enjoyed as unique artistic events, and while it was taken as a matter of course that the composer should reveal new poetic details in the piano parts, every one was surprised to find that an unheralded singer should outshine most of the famous professionals in her ability to stir the soul with her interpretative art. Concerning the impression she made on some famous persons—and on her husband himself—I may be permitted to cite what I wrote in another book,* my information being derived from the composer himself:

"Frau von Holstein, wife of the composer, Franz von Holstein, and a personal friend of Mendelssohn and Schumann, once declared that Mme. Grieg's singing reminded her of Jenny Lind's in its captivating *abandon*, dramatic vivacity, soulful treatment of the poem, and un-

* "Songs and Song Writers." New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons. London: John Murray.

affected manner, unlike that of the typical prima donna. Edmund Neupert sent her one volume of his *études* with the inscription, 'To Mme. Nina Grieg, whose song is more beautiful and warmer than that of all others.' Ibsen, after hearing her interpret his poems as set to music by Grieg, whispered, shaking the hands of both, 'Understood.' Tchaikovsky heard her sing 'Springtide' (Album, Vol. III. No. 38) in Leipsic, and tears came to his eyes. Subsequently he sent her his own songs, with a cordial dedication.

"Mme. Grieg made her last public appearance in 1898 in London, when she also sang for Queen Victoria at Windsor. Now she only sings for her husband and his friends. He deeply regrets that so few had the opportunity to hear her when her voice was in its prime. At that time he hardly realised her superiority to the average professional singer. It seemed to him a matter of course that one should sing so beautifully, so eloquently, so soulfully as she did. Yet her talent was not wasted. It inspired Grieg to renewed efforts. His best songs were written for her; they embody his personal feelings, and he confesses that he could no more have stopped expressing them in songs than he could have stopped breathing. It is an interesting case, showing how conjugal affection may be an inspirer of the arts quite as well as the romantic love which precedes marriage."

VIII

NORWEGIAN FOLK-MUSIC—GRIEG'S ORIGINALITY

KING OSCAR of Sweden—and, until 1905, of Norway—once wrote a book entitled “Aphorisms concerning Music and Song.” Of the popular airs of his realm he said that they “seem a part of our very homes on cold, long winter evenings, by the crackling pine-wood fire on the hearth ; but they are heard to best advantage, perhaps, far from human habitations during the pale, sultry summer nights of the North. They do not glow with the heat of the sun, but with inner warmth and unsophisticated feeling. They emanate from the innermost parts of a people, more than any other, the large majority of which is constrained to live a lonesome life, and, consequently, is predisposed to take a melancholy and even mystical view of the world, but which owns a generous and true heart, and has given countless proofs of earnest character and enduring will. This is why the Swedish popular airs always make a deep impression upon their hearers.”

The climate and remoteness of Sweden and Norway have not only impressed a peculiar local colour on their native music, they have also helped to preserve its primitive character. Some old-fashioned musical instruments, dances, and tunes, which used to be practised in other European places, found their last refuge in the North, which preserved them, somewhat altered by the imprint of its own peculiar stamp ; and to these the Northern people added an abun-

dance of home-made folk art and amusement. How great this abundance is may be inferred from the fact that on the Faroe Islands (a region which, like Telemarken, in South-Western Norway, is peculiarly fertile in folk-songs) there are places where an old custom prescribes that the same song must not be sung in the dance rooms more than once a year.*

Here in the Far North (the Norwegian Hammerfest is the northernmost town in the world) one may still chance upon a dance at which the music is, as in the primitive days elsewhere, vocal instead of instrumental, and the dancers attentive and responsive to the words as they are sung; at weddings, indeed, the first dances are sung to psalm tunes, and the preacher in his sacerdotal robe takes part in them. Usually, however, the dances are too lively for vocal music, and the fiddle is brought into play. The most popular of the folk-dances in the mountainous regions of Norway are the Springdans and the Halling, of each of which there are admirable specimens among Grieg's works, partly borrowed, partly original, while others have been arranged for pianoforte by Kjerulf, Lindemann, &c. The Springdans, so called to distinguish it from the Ganger, or walking dance, is in three-four measure, the Halling in two-four. The Springdans is characterised by a striking combination of binary and ternary rhythms, and a progressive animation very exciting to the hearer. Of the Halling, which is a solo dance, Björnson gives a striking description in his story entitled "Arne":

* A copious collection of Scandinavian folk-songs is contained in the three volumes of Arwidson's "Svenska Fornsanger" (Stockholm, 1834). For students of aboriginal colour this collection is particularly valuable, as the tunes are given without the addition of arbitrary accompaniments, which are so apt to falsify their character. See also Lindemann's collection of 540 Norwegian melodies and dances; Warmuth's "Norske National-og Folke Melodier," and Johan Halvorsen's collection used by Grieg himself (edition Peters).



GRIEG AND SVENDSEN, 1898
From a photograph by K. Nyblin

“The music began, deep silence prevailed, and Nils got ready for the dance. Airily he moved over the floor, marched in time with the music, his body half bent forward and rocking to right and left; now and then he crossed his legs, stood up straight again, assuming the attitude of a thrower, and then marched as at first, bent over. The fiddle was played with a sure hand, the melody became gradually faster and more fiery. Nils inclined his head more and more backwards, and all at once he hit the cross-plank of the ceiling with his foot, so hard that dust and whitewash fell on the spectators. Everybody laughed and shouted, and the girls stood as if they were breathless. Noisily the fiddler played on and on, with more and more fiery and challenging strains. Nils could not resist them; he bowed forward, jumped about in measure, stood up straight, assumed the attitude of a thrower, to fool them, then again crossed his legs under him, and suddenly, when it seemed as if he had no thought of jumping, he hit the plank of the ceiling a resounding blow with his foot, again and again, then threw somersaults in the air, forward and backward, standing straight as a candle on his feet after each. He had all he wanted. The fiddle played a few more bars in rapid time, laboured with tones that became lower and lower, until the dance music died out in a long-sustained bass note.”

Mr. Goldschmidt relates the legend that it once happened that, whilst the dance whirled to the wild, fiery music—to the strain proceeding, as it were, from the depths of the earth, from the foaming waterfall, from the howling tempest of the mountains—the knives of the men left their sheaths, and blood flowed along the floor. The cellarman, on going down to get some beer, saw seated behind a hogshead Old Nick himself playing the fiddle; then, understanding why blood flowed so freely above, he came up and cried: “Stop your ears, the devil plays the fiddle!” There are many legends of a similar kind.

"Everywhere in the North we find among the people tunes that are ascribed to the devil, the Nix, or the subterranean spirits. The player offered up a lamb to the river, and thus induced the Nix to teach him such tunes. But when he subsequently played them, he was unable to stop, but played on and on like a madman, until some one could come to the rescue by cutting his fiddle strings." *

It is necessary to know about such legends if one would understand the spirit and meaning of Norwegian music in all its phases. A quarter of a century ago an English critic, brought up on Handel and Mendelssohn, inveighed against the "rowdiness and brutalities" of some of Grieg's pieces, even as the German critics did against certain scenes in Wagner's operas. In the meantime most of us have learned to appreciate realism in music and to understand that a peasant dance is necessarily wilder than the tunes of our own ball-rooms. Very much, of course, depends on the performance. When Grieg himself plays these pieces a cultivated audience is as thoroughly enthralled as are the Northern peasants by their fiddlers. Extremes meet. Liszt was the first pianist who showed that an artist who plays without his notes is much more eloquent than one who uses them, just as an extempore speaker is more eloquent than one who reads a lecture. Now, the Norwegian peasant fiddlers have never used notes; they play entirely "by heart" in more than one sense; like the gypsies, from whom Liszt learned the secret.

There is another respect in which the peasant fiddlers anticipated the latest stages of modern virtuosity. Some of the weird effects which caused it to be whispered that Paganini had the devil for his ally were produced by altering the tuning of the strings. The players of the old

* Cited from Dr. von Ravn's excellent article on Scandinavian music and instruments, in the supplementary volume to Mendel's "Musikalisches Conversations-Lexikon."

Norwegian fele, or fiddle, have three different ways of tuning it; $a-d-a^1-e^2$; $a-e^1-a^1-e^2$; $a-e^1-a^1-c$ sharp². Nor is this all. When a Richard Strauss or a Martin Loeffler wants to give his orchestral score an ultra-modern colouring, he introduces the viola d'amore, which has, beside the strings that are played on, an equal number placed below them, which vibrate sympathetically and enrich the tone. The Norwegian fele has four of these sympathetic strings.

One of the most wonderful of modern songs—Schubert's *Hurdy-Gurdy Player* (*Der Leiermann*)—has throughout its sixty-one bars a drone-bass of two tones a fifth apart. Such a drone-bass of one or two tones usually accompanies the fele player's melody. It is the earliest form of the organ point, or pedal point, with which the great masters, from Bach to Wagner, have produced some of their grandest effects. Grieg uses it as quaintly and as artistically as Schubert did.* He also uses occasionally still another element of the primitive Norse music which shows how extremes meet. In mediæval times before harmony was invented, melodies were written in several modes (known as the ecclesiastic modes) differing as widely from each other as our modern major and minor modes differ from one another. Three of these church modes—formerly part of the real world-language of music—are to be found in

* The drone bass is a characteristic of Northern instruments in general. Possibly Grieg's love of it was stimulated also by atavistic reminiscences of his Scotch antecedents. The Scotch bagpipe, with its superbly monotonous drone, has a much greater artistic value than our supercilious professional musicians fancy. See the poetic article on "The Music of the Gael," by Vernon Blackburne, in the *London Musical Times* of September 1903. I wish I had room to quote what he says both as to "the cry of the pipes and the immeasurable sadness of the Scottish tunes," and as to the spirit of awful jollity which at other times is upon the bagpipes—a jollity which "grows ten times more awful by reason of the sustained pedal-note, a closely paid attention to which possesses within it some of the stray seeds that grow up into the fine flowers of delirious obsession."

many of the Northern melodies—the hypodorian, the hypolydian, and the Phrygian. Liszt, Franz, Tchaikovsky, and other ultra-modern masters owe some of the most striking effects to the revival of the old modes, which are certainly destined to play a great rôle in the music of the future. As regards Grieg's occasional use of them, he informs me that they came under his pen almost unconsciously. Some of these strange harmonies seem to exaggerate the lugubriousness of our minor mode.

The general spirit of Norwegian music has been well summed up by Carl Engel in his "Study of National Music." He thinks "it is a curious fact that those nations which possess the most lugubrious music possess also the most hilarious tunes. The songs of the Norwegians are generally very plaintive, though at the same time very beautiful; and some of the Norwegian dances have perhaps more resemblance to dirges than to the dances of some other nations; but in single instances the Norwegian tunes exhibit an unbounded joy and cheerfulness, such as we rarely meet with in the music of other people. Indeed, the Norwegians, so far as their music is concerned, might be compared to the hypochondriac, who occasionally, though but seldom, gives himself up to an almost excessive merriment."

Grieg is often spoken of as an embodiment of Scandinavian music. But, as he himself once pointed out in a letter to the *New York Times*: "I am not an exponent of 'Scandinavian' music, but only of Norwegian. The national characteristics of the three peoples—the Norwegians, the Swedes and the Danes—are wholly different, and their music differs just as much." It differs very much as the scenery does; the Norwegian is bolder, rougher, wilder, grander, yet with a green fertile vale here and there in which strawberries and cherries reach a fragrance or flavour hardly attained anywhere else in the world.

Concerning Grieg's relations to the national music of

Norway the most ludicrous notions prevail among professional musicians and amateurs. With a persistence worthy of a better cause the wiseacres keep telling their readers that Grieg made a very promising beginning at Leipsic in writing "world-music," but that after his return to his home he unfortunately turned consciously to Norwegian folk-music, and, "struck with the freshness of the native dances, transplanted them bodily into his academic flower-pots," as one critic puts it; while a second bewails the fact that thenceforth Grieg "stuck in the fjord and never got out of it." A third gives the gist of these lamentations at Grieg's failure to rise to the rank of a writer of "world-music" in these words: "Grieg, despite the many beauties in his works, writes in a dialect quite as truly as did Burns, Christopher North, or Ensign Odoherty."

The second of the critics just cited is a German; the other two are Americans. When a German fancies that his country owns the "world-language" in music, one may pardon him, for national vanity is a universal folly; but when one who is not a German parrots their nonsense about musical "dialects," it is time to protest. Dialect signifies a provincial mode of speaking a language. What is Norway a province of, musically or otherwise? A far wiser and deeper critic than the men just cited, Robert Schumann wrote, as we have seen, that "the North is most decidedly entitled to a language of its own."

At one time, not so very long ago, Italian was the "world-language" in music. When the Germans began to graft their harmonies and dissonances on this euphonious stock, the Italians were aghast at the Northern "rowdiness and brutalities,"* and in all probability they considered

* It is well known that when Mozart, in 1785, wrote six quartets (dedicated to Haydn), and they were sent to Artaria, that Italian promptly returned them to the publisher with the complaint that they were full of misprints. When the Hungarian Prince Grassalkowitch heard these quartets, he thought the players were making mistakes, and on finding that they were following copy he tore up the music.

German music a mere "dialect." As a matter of fact, the Germans were enriching the world-language of music with precious new material ; and this is precisely what Grieg has done with his alleged Norse "dialect." He has provided a large storehouse of absolutely new melodic material—a boon to countless students and imitators ; he has created the latest harmonic atmosphere in music, having gone beyond even Liszt and the most audacious Germans in his innovations ; and he has thus, like Schubert, like Wagner, like Chopin, *enlarged the world-language of music*. He has taught his new idioms to some of the most prominent composers of his time, among them Tchaikovsky, Paderewski, D'Albert, MacDowell. A Viennese critic has pointed out "unmistakable analogies" between the harmonic peculiarities of Grieg and those of Richard Strauss ; and as Grieg had done most of his work when Strauss began, he is, of course, the originator, and Strauss the disciple.

From every point of view that interests the music-lover, Grieg is one of the most original geniuses in the musical world of the present or past. His songs are a mine of melody, surpassed in wealth only by Schubert's, and that only because there are more of Schubert's. In originality of harmony and modulation he has only six equals : Bach, Schubert, Chopin, Schumann, Wagner, and Liszt. In rhythmic invention and combination he is inexhaustible, and as orchestrator he ranks among the most fascinating. To speak of such a man—seven-eighths of whose works are still music of the future—as a writer in "dialect," is surely the acme of unintelligence. If Grieg did "stick in the fjord and never get out of it," even a German ought to thank heaven for it. Grieg in a fjord is much more picturesque and more interesting to the world than he would have been in the Elbe or the Spree.

Many worthy Germans fancy to the present day that Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Liszt, and Dvořák wrote in musical "dialects" in so far as they incorporated Polish, Russian,



Ole Olsen, Lammers, Frau Gmür-Harloff, Cappelen, Halvorsen, Frau Grieg, Svendsen, Sinding, F, an Erika die Nissen, Holter,
Schjelderup.
 A GROUP OF DISTINGUISHED SCANDINAVIANS

Hungarian, and Bohemian characteristics in their works. They forget that some of their own masters—Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms among them—gladly made use of the folk-music of foreign countries (notably Hungary), without being accused of speaking a dialect. Then there is Haydn, usually called the father of classical music—the world-music to which Mozart and Beethoven and all the others contributed their quota. Yet what Haydn did was so precisely like what Grieg is accused of doing that what Mr. Hadow says in the admirable volume he contributed to the “Oxford History of Music,” concerning the Croatian Haydn, applies word for word to the Norwegian Grieg: “Eisenstadt lay near his home, the whole countryside was full of the folk-songs which he had loved from childhood—songs of the ploughman and the reaper, of rustic courtship and village merrymaking. Half unconsciously he began to weave them into the texture of his composition; borrowing here a phrase, there a strain, there an entire melody, and gradually fashioning his own tunes on these models; . . . they find their way into everything—quartets, concertos, divertimenti, even hymns and masses; *they renew with fresh and vigorous life an art that appeared to be growing old before its time.*”

Grieg's relation to the popular art of his country is admirably indicated in his preface to his last published opus (72), entitled “Slätter,” and containing seventeen peasant dances, written down by John Halvorsen as played on the Hardanger fiddle by an old musician in Telemarken:

“Those who can appreciate this kind of music will be delighted at the extraordinary originality of these tunes, their blending of delicacy and grace with rough power and untamed wildness as regards the melody and more particularly the rhythm. These traditional tunes, handed down from an age when the Norwegian peasantry was isolated from the world in its solitary mountain valleys, all bear the stamp of an imagination equally daring and bizarre.

“My object in arranging this music for the pianoforte was to attempt to raise these folk-tunes to an artistic level by harmonising them in a style suitable to their nature. It is obvious that many of the little embellishments characteristic of the peasant’s fiddle and his peculiar manner of bowing cannot be reproduced on the pianoforte, and had therefore to be left out. By way of compensation the piano has the advantage of enabling us to avoid excessive monotony by virtue of its dynamic and rhythmic capacities and by varying the harmony in case of repetitions. I have endeavoured to trace the melodic lines clearly, and to make the outlines of forms definite and coherent.”

While noting these interesting facts, it is of the utmost importance, if we would be just to Grieg, to guard against the egregious and all too prevalent error of supposing that the essence and substance of his art are borrowed from the Norse folk-music. Writers on musical topics have taken strangely little trouble to study this question, as is illustrated by the fact that so scholarly a critic as Philip Goëpp could write, not long ago: “The wealth of harmonic invention of Grieg suggests a wonder whether, after all, much of the purely individual quality of his music has not been mistaken for a national vein.” Quite so. Ernest Closson wrote, in 1892: “Strange thing! Grieg has so thoroughly identified himself with the musical spirit of his country that the rôles have become, as it were, reversed. His personality—a personality which in itself has nothing in common with the music of the people—seems to have become the prototype of this same music of the people; and the composers, his compatriots, imitate and copy him quite innocently in the belief that they are simply making use of local colour!” In my “Songs and Song Writers” I took occasion to say on this point:

“While his compositions are unmistakably Norwegian, it is important to remember that *there is much more of Grieg in them than of Norway*. The melodies, though

redolent of their native soil, are emphatically his own—you do not find such enchanting melodies even among Norwegian folk-songs—and still more unmistakably his own are his bold and fascinating harmonies; for folk-music in its primitive state has no harmonies at all, whereas Grieg's music, as I have already remarked, represents the very latest phase in the evolution of harmony. His modulations are as unique, as unexpected, as abrupt, yet as natural as Schubert's; and they have the same power of moving us to tears. As in the case of Chopin, imitators have copied these individual peculiarities of Grieg's genius without any thought of robbing his beehives, but simply under the delusion that they were helping themselves to the common stores of wild honey. . . . 'How delightfully Norwegian!' amateurs and professionals are apt to exclaim, when they ought to say, 'How delightfully Griegian!' . . . Among his seventy [72] works, there are, beside two [3] volumes of pianoforte arrangements of popular tunes, only three (notably op. 30, 35, and 64) in which he has incorporated Norwegian melodies; all the others are his own. 'Solvejg's Lied' is obviously a conscious imitation of the national music, but it stands almost alone in this respect. On the whole there is probably more of the Norwegian colouring in Grieg's pianoforte music than in his songs; but the more we study Norwegian folk-song and the Northern composers before Grieg, the more we are astounded at his originality."

This matter cannot be too much emphasised. Largely through indolence and a parroting propensity on the part of musical critics and historians, a cruel injustice has been done to one of the most original and influential geniuses in the realm of music—an injustice the more to be deplored because Grieg has been an invalid the greater part of his life, and therefore must have been often depressed by the customary incorrect estimates of his achievements. True, the public has been on his side, but that very fact the

pedants have turned against him. "To the musical amateur," writes one of them superciliously, "no contemporary composer is better known than Grieg. Every school-girl plays his piano pieces [?], young violinists study his delightfully melodious sonatas, and few concert pieces are more widely loved than the Peer Gynt Suite. Yet from professional musicians Grieg does not meet with such favour. Many speak of him patronisingly, some scornfully. 'Grieg!' they say, 'Oh yes, very charming, but——'; and the sentence ends with a shrug."

Is this true? Do professional musicians shrug their shoulders at Grieg, while amateurs and the public adore him? If so, Grieg's immortality is assured, for the history of musical genius shows that whenever there has been such a discrepancy the amateurs have invariably worsted the professionals. Now, there can be no doubt that professionals do speak of Grieg superciliously—quite as superciliously as they used to speak of Bach and Mozart, and Gluck and Beethoven, and Schubert and Chopin, and Schumann and Wagner, and Liszt and others—that is, the minor musicians, the small fry of the profession, do this. But the great men in the profession (it takes genius to appreciate genius) recognised Grieg at once as a peer. Ole Bull and Gade may be disregarded here, for they might have been influenced by a Scandinavian bias when they welcomed him to their ranks. Not so Liszt. His eagle eye, as we have seen, instantly discovered the rare and precious gift of originality in Grieg's works; and he knew, too, that the pedants and philistines would scarify him for the very things that were newest and most valuable in him, wherefore his exhortation: "Do not let them intimidate you" (*abschrecken*)—a bit of advice which, no doubt, comforted Grieg as often as Liszt's approval comforted Wagner in the years when most of the "professionals" shrugged their shoulders at his "music of the future," as they scornfully called it.

Tchaikovsky was another master who instantly recognised the originality of Grieg's genius, concerning which he wrote in his Diary :

"Hearing the music of Grieg, we instinctively recognise that it was written by a man impelled by an irresistible impulse to give vent by means of sounds to a flood of poetical emotion, which obeys no theory or principle, is stamped with no impress but that of a vigorous and sincere artistic feeling. Perfection of form, strict and irreproachable logic in the development of his themes, are not perseveringly sought after by the celebrated Norwegian. But what charm, what inimitable and rich musical imagery ! What warmth and passion in his melodic phrases, what teeming vitality in his harmony, what originality and beauty in the turn of his piquant and ingenious modulations and rhythms, and in all the rest what interest, novelty, and independence ! If we add to all this that rarest of qualities, a perfect simplicity, far removed from all affectation and pretence to obscurity and far-fetched novelty," &c.

"I trust it will not appear like self-glorification that my dithyramb in praise of Grieg precedes the statement that our natures are closely allied. Speaking of Grieg's high qualities, I do not at all wish to impress my readers with the notion that I am endowed with an equal share of them. I leave it to others to decide how far I am lacking in all that Grieg possesses in such abundance, but I cannot help stating the fact that he exercises and has exercised some measure of that attractive force which always drew me towards the gifted Norwegian." *

* In connection with the above I cannot resist the malicious impulse to call attention to an amusing instance of "professional shoulder-shrugging" in the "Scandinavian Number" of *Die Musik* (Berlin), wherein the same critic who lamented the fact that Grieg "stuck in the fjord," declared that while "not a genius," he is "fresher and has more substance" than Chopin, and resembles Tchaikovsky, who is at present "very much overrated." There you are ! Three of the greatest men of the modern musical world smitten with the jawbone of one piano teacher !

Hans von Bülow, in a letter dated London, November 27, 1878, exclaimed with reference to certain works of Tchaikovsky: "Blasé though I am, I was truly enchanted, nay intoxicated, by their freshness, power, depth, and originality." He is a true *tone-poet*," he declared, and added that Edvard Grieg is another, after explaining that "a tone-poet is above all things a romanticist who, however, developing into a genius, may also become a classic, as, for instance, Chopin." In another letter, dated March 16, 1874, he says: "Hartvigson, who had accompanied me to Moscow, gave me enormous joy with a sonata for violin and piano (opus 8) by Grieg, which unites the advantage of Rubinstein's imagination with Raff's structural skill. The work has appeared in a cheap edition (Peters)—you must get it *immediately* and refresh yourself with it."*

* Grieg's music will take care of itself. It is for the honour of musicians, and to prove my assertion that it is the small fry and not the high-class professionals who shrug their shoulders at Grieg, that I wish to place on record a few additional opinions which will help future generations to judge how far his wondrous genius was appreciated by his contemporaries. I confine myself to artists concerning whose attitude I can speak from personal knowledge. Paderewski told me, not long ago, that his admiration of Grieg's works grew more ardent the more he studied them. MacDowell simply worships Grieg, to whom he dedicated two of his sonatas. "His music is like a glass of fresh water in a desert," he once said to a pupil. D'Albert has long been a Grieg missionary; on one of his American tours he hardly gave a concert without a piece by the Norwegian. Raoul Pugno is another who plays Grieg *con amore*; so do Teresa Carreno and Fannie Bloomfield-Zeissler, while Dr. Wm. Mason, the Nestor of American pianists and teachers, is one of his pioneer champions. Among the great violinists who adore him are Brodsky, who has written about him in his *Reminiscences*; Fritz Kreisler and Johannes Wolff; the latter, who made a concert tour with Grieg in England in 1897, writes to me: "His sonatas are *grand*; they are much played, but very few know how to play Grieg; you must know him, his beautiful country, and the Norwegian character. His works are full of passion and poetry; the more I play them the more I love them, and always I find *freshness* and beauty. Grieg is a great man." The vocalists who give song recitals have not yet given Grieg's songs the attention they deserve—to their own detriment. Some, however, have discovered these

treasures, notably Lilli Lehmann, who gives them much space on her programmes. For orchestra, Grieg wrote comparatively little, but the two greatest musical missionaries America has harboured lost no opportunity to bring forward what there was. Theodore Thomas's list (for which I am indebted to Mrs. Thomas) included the concert overture "In the Autumn," the two "Peer Gynt" Suites, "Sigurd Jorsalfar," "Symphonic Dances," "Evening in the Mountain," "At the Cradle," "Heart Wounds," "Spring," "Norwegian Melodies," "Cow-keeper's Tune," and "Country Dances," scenes from "Olaf Trygvason," piano concerto, "Eit Syn." Anton Seidl, not content with these, arranged several of the pianoforte pieces for orchestra. I called Grieg's attention, after Seidl's death, to four of these, constituting a Norwegian Suite. Finally, I may mention the fact that the theorists also are beginning to awake to the fact that Grieg's harmonies mark a new departure in music. In his "Die Freiheit oder Unfreiheit der Töne" (Leipsic: C. F. Kahnt), Georg Capellen devotes twenty-six pages to an analysis of Grieg's harmonic innovations. He thus sums up his views: "Grieg is recognised far beyond his native country as one of the few masters who have enriched music with new means of harmonic and melodic expression, and created an admirable home-art distinguished by poetic feeling and the charm of many moods (*Stimmungsreiz*). For this reason the study of his 'Lyrical Pieces' for piano, in particular, cannot be too highly commended to music lovers, were it only to make it clear to them that the one-sided, narrow theoretical rules, as usually taught, too often fail in face of this lovely art, without its losing thereby any of its charm."

IX

ORCHESTRAL AND CHAMBER MUSIC

WHILE the majority of Grieg's works are songs and piano-forte pieces, there is yet a goodly supply of orchestral and chamber music. The "Grieg Katalog," printed by C. F. Peters in Leipsic* contains a list of nine works for orchestra: Overture, "In the Autumn," op. 11; "Two Elegiac Melodies" for string orchestra, op. 34; "Norwegian Dances," op. 35; "Holberg Suite" for string orchestra, op. 40; "Peer Gynt Suites," I. and II., op. 46 and 55; "Two Melodies" for string orchestra, op. 53; "Sigurd Jorsalfar," op. 56; "Two Northern Melodies" for string orchestra, op. 66.

The orchestration of these pieces (op. 35 is by another hand) reveals Grieg as a consummate master of the art of painting delicate yet glowing colours on his canvas. These colours are more like those of Schubert and Dvořák than like those of Berlioz and Richard Strauss; in the visual world they have an analogue in the ethereal yet brilliant beauty of the Santa Rosa (Shirley) poppies created by Luther Burbank of California, the floral reformer, which elicit "ohs!" and "ahs!" from all who see them. Originality, too, is manifested by Grieg in this department of music as in all others. Professor Prout, in his standard work on orchestration (Vol. II, p. 254) strongly urges

* Grieg had the good sense of having all his music printed in Germany, from the beginning, in a cheap edition. This has greatly accelerated its popularity.

students to examine as being "particularly instructive" the "Holberg Suite," written for pianoforte and arranged by the composer for orchestra, by way of learning "how much alteration may sometimes be necessary in orchestral transcriptions of pianoforte music." In another place he cites the Andante Doloroso (Aase's Death) from the first "Peer Gynt" suite, where the opening theme is repeated very loudly, and remarks: "Here we have five-part harmony; and a strange and very unusual effect is obtained by the *f* and *ff* for muted strings. The mutes are almost invariably employed only for quiet passages."

"*Peer Gynt*."—Inasmuch as this "Peer Gynt" music has probably done more than any other work of Grieg to make his name known in musical circles, it is proper to begin our bird's-eye view of his compositions with it. The genesis of this music, and the first performances of it in connection with Ibsen's drama were referred to in a previous chapter. As that drama, for the reasons given, did not appeal to theatre-goers outside of Scandinavia, Grieg very wisely combined four of the best numbers into a Suite for orchestra, which was published in the late eighties; it made a sensation, is a favourite to-day, and will remain so for many years to come. Subsequently, four other numbers were issued as Suite No. II. These Suites are seldom played without one number or two being redemanded; the music is here so exquisitely beautiful, there so wild and realistic, that it carries its own message; yet it gains a new significance if we know the situations for which it was written, wherefore a thumb-nail sketch of the plot will be in place here; with its aid the reader can easily place the eight numbers of the Suites by their titles.

Peer Gynt is a rough Norwegian peasant youth, who, in the first act, drives his mother Aase (Ohse) to distraction by his fantastic talk and ruffianly actions. His dream is to become emperor of the world. Everybody dreads and avoids him. He hears that the beautiful Ingrid is to be

married, goes uninvited to the wedding, and carries the bride into the mountain wilderness. The next day, deaf to her laments, he deserts her, after taunting her with not having the golden locks or the meekness of the tender-hearted Solvejg (Sölvigg), who, at the wedding, loved him at sight, notwithstanding his ruffianly appearance and behaviour. After diverse adventures, Peer finds himself in the Hall of the Mountain King, where he is tortured by gnomes and sprites, who alternate their wild dances with deadly threats; he is rescued at the last moment by the sound of bells in the distance, which make the hall of the goblins collapse. Then he builds a hut in the forest, and Solvejg comes to him on her snow-shoes of her own free will. Weeping, she tells him she has left her sister and parents to share his hut and be his wife. Happiness seems to be his at last, but he is haunted by the gnomes, who threaten to torment him every moment of his life, whereat, without saying a word to his bride, he leaves her and returns to his mother. Aase is on her death-bed, and soon expires in his arms. Later, he turns up in Africa, where he has divers adventures. Having succeeded in stealing from robbers a horse and a royal garment, he goes among the Arabs and plays the rôle of a prophet. He makes love to the beautiful Anitra, daughter of a Bedouin chief, and elopes with her on horseback; but she, after cajoling all his stolen jewels from him, suddenly turns her horse and gallops back home. In the last act, Peer Gynt, after suffering shipwreck on the Norwegian coast, returns to the hut he has built in the forest; there he finds Solvejg faithfully awaiting his return, and dies as she sings the tearful melody known as "Solvejg's Cradle Song."

One need not go so far as Dr. Hanslick, who wrote in 1891: "Perhaps in a few years Ibsen's 'Peer Gynt' will live only through Grieg's music, which, to my taste, has more poetry and artistic intelligence in every number than the whole five-act monstrosity of Ibsen." There is, no

doubt, much that is "monstrous" and repulsive in this drama, yet there is also much that is highly interesting, poetic, and realistically suggestive of Northern scenery and legend, while the death of Aase and the love of Solvejg are moving episodes worthy of a great composer's best efforts; they inspired Grieg to tone-poems, which, in their way, have never been surpassed. As for the conservative Dr. Hanslick, his growing enthusiastic over a contemporary composer (apart from Brahms) was such an unusual thing that his brief and apt characterisation of the four numbers of the first Suite may also be cited: "1. The prelude to the fourth act, Morning-mood; a pleasing idyll with dancing lights of flute-trills on the gentle uniform wave-movement. 2. The dainty dance of the slender Bedouin's daughter, Anitra; charming in invention, and orchestrated with magic art. 3. A sorrowful quiet adagio in A minor, on the death of Peer Gynt's mother; the simple, song-like melody made more impressive by some felicitous harmonies. Finally, 4. The immensely characteristic, clumsily baroque dance of the dwarfs in the cave of the 'Troll-Princess.'"

The limits placed on this volume make it impossible to comment in detail on this or any of the other compositions to be alluded to in this chapter or the next. There is room for only a few more lines regarding the strikingly original and ineffably beautiful "Peer Gynt" music. It should, of course, be heard with orchestra, but the composer's excellent version for the piano is also very satisfactory. Open the first Suite in this pianoforte version (Peters' edition) at p. 6, and ask yourself if there is anything more exquisite in melody and harmonic sequence in all Schubert—or all anybody—than the first five bars. There is something in that music which haunts me—and I am sure it must haunt others—like a vision of paradise obtained in a dream. "Aase's Death" has the same haunting quality, and in Anitra's Dance there are wondrous bars—the first twelve on page 10—which seem to contain the quintessence

of all that is blissful and ecstatic in Arabic love. And how terrifically exciting the dance in the hall of the Mountain King is, with its ever-increasing whirl and vivacity, its *sempre crescendo* and *sempre stretto al fine*! Another wildly agitated and effective piece is the Storm and the Return of Peer Gynt in the second Suite. The "Arabian Dance" in this, though quaint, is not equal to "Anitra's Dance," whereas "Ingrid's Lament" is not only interesting as music but as suggesting a genuine operatic vein. This second Suite also includes one of the two vocal solos in this score—"Solvejg's Lied," one of the most popular of Grieg's songs, a monologue in which Solvejg vows she will wait faithfully for Peer's return, and the celestial "Cradle Song" of Solvejg, which I would not give for all the songs of Brahms, Hugo Wolf, and Richard Strauss put together. The creative thrill of delight which Grieg must have felt when he penned the last twelve bars of this song—which have not their equal in more than twelve other songs ever composed—surely atoned for all the disappointments of his life. This death-song closes the quasi-operatic score of "Peer Gynt," and if there is, excepting "Tristan and Isolde," an opera which has a more deeply emotional or a more sorrowful ending, I have not heard it.*

"*Sigurd Jorsalfar*."—If Grieg never wrote an opera, this was due less to a lack of inclination than to his weakened bodily frame, which would have made so sustained an effort dangerous, if not fatal.

There is much that is genuinely dramatic, not only in "Peer Gynt" but in several scores for which Björnson furnished the poetic basis: "Sigurd Jorsalfar," "At the Cloister Gate," "Recognition of Land," "Olaf Trygvason," and "Bergliot." Concerning "Sigurd Jorsalfar," Grieg wrote in the *Festschrift*, which appeared on the occasion

* "Solvejg's Lied" is in the third Grieg Album for voice, Solvejg's "Cradle Song" in the fifth. The reference, in this book, is always to the Peters edition.

of Björnson's seventieth birthday: "The play was to be produced at the Christiania Theatre after such a short preparation that I was allowed only eight days to write and orchestrate the music. But I had the elasticity of youth, and it went." Björnson was not present at the first production (1872), but he was at its revival the following May. It was anything but a good performance; the music must have been literally "executed," for the composer relates that he suffered such tortures when Hammer, who was a good actor, began to sing, that he would have been glad to hide himself, and instinctively he bent over more and more, cowering in his seat, until Björnson poked him in the ribs and said, "Sit up properly." "I started as if stung by a wasp," Grieg added, "and thenceforth to the end I behaved myself and sat motionless on the scoffer's chair." Nevertheless the occasion was a triumph, and after the performance the two authors went to Björnson's and lunched on some "delicious old cheese." The children, too, came in, exclaiming, "Just think, we were up in the 'paradise,' and we saw papa and Grieg come on the stage!"

"Sigurd Jorsalfar" (Sigurd the Crusader) is not one of Björnson's chief works, but it is, as Grieg writes, "a folk-piece in the best sense of the word, and is often performed on national holidays." In its version for pianoforte solo it consists of three numbers: an Introduction, an Intermezzo ("Borghild's Dream"), and a Triumphal March.* This third piece is one of the most superb marches in existence, equalled only by the marches of Schubert, Wagner and Tchaikovsky (Marche Slave). It is one of the longest of Grieg's pieces and one of the most stirring. The *Piu mosso* beginning on page 12 (of the version for piano solo) is one of the most exquisitely tender episodes in all musical

* The reference is to No. 2655 of the Peters edition. No. 2486 contains the score, and 2488 the pianoforte version, of two songs from "Sigurd Jorsalfar" for solo, male chorus, and orchestra, "The Nordland People," and "King's Song."

literature ; a melody rivalling Schubert, the greatest of all melodists, at his very best. Yet how few know this sublime march ! What a pitiable spectacle to see the millions eating acorns when they might have ambrosia ! And the most aggravating thing about it is that the public would really prefer the food of the gods if it were only allowed to taste it. Professional musicians are the professional enemies of good music.

Concerning the first and second numbers, A. E. Keeton remarks (*Temple Bar*, vol. 113) :

“ His incidental music to Björnson’s ‘ Sigurd Jorsalfar ’ is wonderfully in character with the dramatic story of the adventurous Norwegian crusader. To those who are fond of comparisons, it may not be devoid of interest to view its intermezzo, ‘ Borghild’s Dream ’ beside Elsa’s vision in Wagner’s ‘ Lohengrin ; ’ the two composers’ ideas of a woman’s love-dream are curiously divergent ; both, though, have seized the possibilities of a simple scale as a means of expressing an emotion. With Wagner the dream would seem to float upwards, soaring ever higher and higher ; with Grieg it tends to descend, as from heaven to earth.”

“ *Bergliot*.”—This work, which some consider the most inspired of Grieg’s compositions, belongs in the same class as Schumann’s music to Byron’s “ Manfred,” being a melodramatic vocal and orchestral accompaniment to a Björnson poem, the content of which is thus given (for use in concert programmes) in the printed score :

“ In the ‘ Harold Hadradis Saga,’ chapter 45 reads toward the end : When Einar Thambarskelvir’s wife Bergliot, who had remained in the inn at Trondhjem, heard that her husband and son (Eindride) had fallen, she at once went up to the royal castle, where the peasant army was, and ardently incited them to battle. But at that moment the King (Harald Hardradi) came rowing down the river. Then said Bergliot : ‘ Now we miss here my



BJÖRNSON AND GRIEG AT THE VILLA TROLDHAWGEN, 1893

cousin Hakon Ivarson ; Einar's slayer would not row down the river if Hakon stood here on the bank.' ”

While “Bergliot” was composed in 1870 or 1871, it was not orchestrated and published till nearly two decades later. It reveals, like the declamatory parts of some of Grieg's songs, a pronounced dramatic instinct for the right thing. The most interesting part, musically, is the funeral march, toward the close of which there is what seems like a vague anticipation of the Titurel march in “Parsifal.” With a great Wagnerian actress to declaim the text, this melodrama ought to be remarkably effective.*

“*In the Autumn.*”—Of the works for orchestra alone, the overture, “In the Autumn,” is the earliest. It was written at Rome in 1865, and is based on the realistic and very effective song, “Autumn Storms” (Opus 18), which was composed earlier in the same year in Denmark. It has been stated that the overture was rewritten two decades later, but this is an error ; only the orchestration was altered, so the composer informs me : “Die Conception ist überall die ursprüngliche.” The orchestra naturally provides more powerful means than the piano and voice for painting the trees as they are being despoiled of their leaves by the storm winds as well as the ensuing longings for spring ; and the composer has made good use of his opportunities showing himself a master of the art of reaching a climax. Concerning this overture, Mr. H. E. Krehbiel remarks :

“The circumstance that the first phrase of the introduction (which is often recurred to in the development of the allegro) is amusingly like the beginning of ‘Yankee Doodle’ in a minor mode, is a little disturbing to that seriousness with which a larger work by a sterling composer ought to be approached ; but it does not preclude

* A French admirer of Grieg, Henry Maubel (Maurice Belval) seems to consider “Bergliot,” with its “harmonies noires d'une plénitude admirable,” the composer's masterwork. See the pages (71-73) he devotes to it in his “*Préfaces pour des Musiciens.*” (Paris : Fischbacher.)

admiration for the original and ingenious orchestral effects which fill the work. The spirit of the piece is unmistakably Norse, and its humour is mixed with that melancholy which seems inseparable from the rugged physiognomy of nature in the north country."

"*Holberg Suite*."—In 1884 the Scandinavians celebrated the two-hundredth birthday of Ludwig Holberg, the founder of modern Danish literature, who has been called the Molière of the North, although, as A. E. Keeton has remarked, "his purpose and aims were of much deeper import than can be ascribed to the brilliant and satiric comedy writer of France." Gade contributed to this jubilee an orchestral Suite, "*Holbergiana*," while Grieg commemorated his fellow-townsmen with his *Holberg Suite* for string orchestra "in ye olden style." Dr. Hanslick's comments on this composition are of interest, the more so as that Viennese critic seldom had a good word for his contemporaries:

"A refined, happily conceived (*geistreiche*) work, less pretentious and exotic than the compositions of this Norwegian are apt to be. The antique is cleverly reproduced in the forms, rhythms, ornamentations, yet filled with the modern spirit. Charming is the air in G minor, with its gentle, easily soothed melancholy; while the Rigaudon dance, which effectively closes the Suite, is full of vivacity and humour. Georg Brandes says, in an excellent essay concerning Holberg: 'Whatever he produces he treats from the merry point of view. Seldom is there any other than a happy mood, very seldom a trait of melancholy, once only a touch of pathos.' Of this characterisation of Holberg we were reminded on listening to the Suite of Grieg, which likewise takes life easily and makes our enjoyment easy."

There are several other works in which Grieg has revealed his rare gift for refined orchestral colouring. They are "*Two Elegiac Melodies for String Orchestra*" ("Heart

Wounds" and "Last Spring"), Opus 34; "Two Melodies for String Orchestra," Opus 53 (versions of his songs "Norwegian" and "First Meeting"); and "Two Melodies for String Orchestra," Opus 63 ("Im Volkston," "Cowkeeper's Tune and Peasant Dance"). These songs have become more widely known in their beautiful orchestral garbs than as *Lieder*, yet they ought to be played ten times oftener in concert halls than they are. There is more substance and beauty in them than in most symphonies.*

Chamber Music.—In the realm of chamber music Edvard Grieg, with his five works, would not count for much if quantity were the criterion of excellence; but qualitatively he belongs in the first rank. In the concert halls of the

* Beside Grieg's own versions there is the "Norwegian Suite," arranged by Seidl (referred to in the footnote near the end of the previous chapter), and the "Norwegian Dances" op. 35, arranged by Sitt. There is also the "Fjeldslaat," orchestrated by the nephew of Queen Louise, the Landgrave of Hesse, which has been played at a Philharmonic concert in Copenhagen with a Grieg programme. It is at Philharmonic concerts everywhere that Grieg's Suites and orchestral songs should be heard more frequently. When Prof. Nikisch put the first "Peer Gynt" Suite on a Philharmonic programme in Berlin by way of celebrating Grieg's sixtieth birthday, one of the critics patted the music on the back and added superciliously that it was "already played at beer and garden concerts." Quite true; he might have said also that the most popular of all music at "beer and garden concerts" is Wagner's. But the proper place for Wagner's music is in the opera-house, and for Grieg's at high-class concerts. Prof. Nikisch's audience (the most highly cultivated in Berlin) re-demanded one of the "Peer Gynt" pieces, and Dr. Hanslick thus summed up the impression made by this music at a Philharmonic concert in Vienna: "The audience had bestowed such lavish applause on Grieg that I feared for the fate of the following number. . . ." If conductors everywhere followed the example of Hans Richter and Nikisch, it would be money in the pockets of their guarantors. Too many conductors seem to aim at "enticing" music lovers to stay at home by playing chiefly ponderous works that are in no danger of being re-demanded. At any rate, we need a change from the wearisome monotony of symphonies, symphonic poems, and overtures; and for such a change Grieg has provided admirably. His orchestral pieces are, as Schjelderup remarks, "admired by all who do not make interminableness a condition of greatness."

future no music of this class will be more frequently played than his superb string quartet, and his no less admirable sonatas for violin and piano. Of these violin sonatas there are three—Op. 8, 13, 45—and they are as different from one another as three Wagner operas. The first of them excited the admiration not only of Gade, but of the censorious and ultra-academic Fr. Niecks, who wrote regarding it (in 1879) that it seemed to him to be “Grieg’s supreme creative achievement in the larger forms. It calls up in our imagination scenes such as the composer was surrounded by in his youth—the seaport town leaning against high mountains of rock, the Byfjord, and the main beyond. We are in the open air with a bracing breeze about us. Amid these invigorating influences that dilate the whole being, body and soul, the meaning of the interval of the ninth at once reveals itself. The interval of the eleventh, which occurs in the second bar of the first subject, is only a more potent interpreter of the same feeling. Smoothly the boat glides onward, the water rushing and splashing along its sides. Now we are in the open sea” [so he got out of the fjord after all !], “a wide expanse bounded only by the horizon. . . . The remaining portion of the working-out section pictures the whistling and roaring of the storm, the upheaving of the waves, the creaking and groaning of the vessel. . . . The first movement tells us of action and the struggle with the elements, the second of rest and home enjoyments. The *Allegro quasi andantino* is an exquisite *genre* picture to which the national colouring gives a peculiar charm. It represents a scene full of contentedness, good-natured humour, and playfulness; it is a harmony without a false note in it. With one rush the last movement takes us again into the midst of the bustle of life. Here are vigour and fire in abundance, but also contrasting pensive passages are not wanting. Grieg may be seen in this movement gloriously soaring on the wings of chords of the ninth.”

The second violin sonata Niecks does (or did) not like so well as the first, but the full-blooded Griegites like it better, for the same reason that the Wagnerites like "Tristan and Isolde" better than "Lohengrin"; there is more of the essence of Grieg in it. The first sonata is, as Schjelderup remarks, the work of a youth who has seen only the sunny side of life, while the second is the gift to the world of a man who has also shivered in the cold mists of night, and has learned the meaning of grief and disappointment.

"The tragic nature of his home overwhelms the artist. For this reason the second sonata is in a deeper sense much more Norwegian even than the first; for a Norway without tragedy is not a complete Norway, but only a part of the varied impressions which this mighty dreamland gives to him who can understand the language of nature."

Although betraying everywhere a complete mastery of the art of orthodox construction, the composer allows himself a freedom of style which is a token of his modernity and originality.

While Grieg composed a master-song like "I love thee" at almost as early an age as the biographic dates of Schubert's "Erlking" and Mendelssohn's overture to "Midsummer Night's Dream," his genius nevertheless matured and deepened gradually, as is strikingly shown by the third of his violin sonatas, opus 45, dedicated to the painter Lenoir—a work, as Lawrence Gilman remarks, "built greatly upon great lines . . . The mood, the emotion, are heroic; here are virility, breadth, a passionate urge and ardour. With what an intensity of grieving Grieg has charged those wailing chromatic phrases, for the violin and piano in imitation, in the working-out section of the first movement! and the C major passage in the last movement, with its richly canorous theme for the solo instrument against arching arpeggios in the accompaniment, is superb in breadth and power." Even more enthusiastic

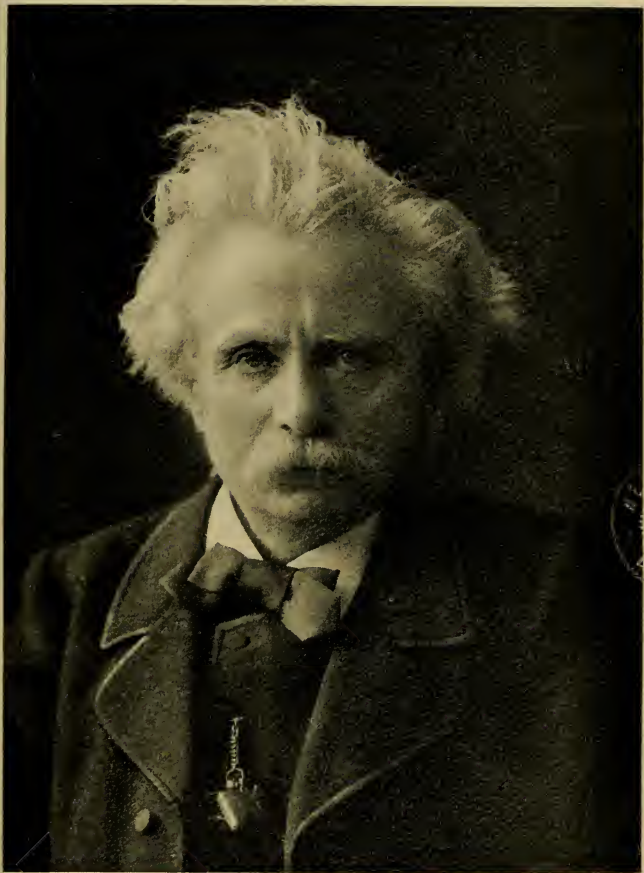
than this American critic is the French, Ernest Closson, who writes regarding this sonata :

“ It must be classed with the most inspired scores ever written. It is, in our opinion, the work of Grieg which most truly deserves to be called grand. From beginning to end it is a marvel of inspiration, intelligence, independence. The art of the people is here, once more, largely placed under tribute [?], but with harmonies of a boldness and a delicacy that are admirable. Finally, there is, what contributes not a little to the grandeur just referred to, a simplicity, an austerity, a sort of classicism within modernity in the final movement. Had Grieg composed nothing but this sonata it would suffice to hand his name down to posterity.”

In the sonata for violoncello and piano (op. 36), which is dedicated to the composer's brother, there is also much that is fascinating—so much that one regrets that Grieg did not write more for that warm-toned instrument. The well-known Boston violoncellist, Wulf Fries (whom Rubinstein chose as his associate in America), was so fond of this sonata that he wanted more of the same kind, and wrote to the composer, who replied : “ I, too, am ill. Allow me therefore to express myself briefly ; and—in Norwegian, which I hope you still understand. Unfortunately, I have written nothing whatever for 'cello since the sonata in A minor. What has appeared of mine, later than that, for this instrument is arranged by the late Goltermann. They are chiefly small pieces. Publisher : C. F. Peters, in Leipsic.”*

Last, but far from least, among the chamber-music works we must mention the splendid quartet, opus 27. The orthodox conception of a quartet is that it should address itself solely to the intellect, making as little appeal

* The “ Grieg Katalog ” of Peters also contains a list of various other arrangements of Grieg's pieces for diverse instruments, including the organ.



EDWARD GRIEG, MAY, 1904
From a photograph by Karl Anderson, Christiania

as possible to the senses and the feelings. It is a truly asinine ideal, but unfortunately most compositions of this class follow it with pedantic conscientiousness, which is the reason why chamber-music is the least popular branch of the divine art. Grieg, fortunately, did not aim at this kind of unpopularity; his quartet, while replete with thoughts, is as beautiful sensuously and as deeply emotional as Schubert's D minor quartet (with the heavenly variations on "Death and the Maiden") and Smetana's touching autobiographic "Aus Meinem Leben." It was written at a time when he sought rest in the country after his soul had been harrowed by heartrending experiences. "That the natural surroundings also play a *rôle* in the music is self-evident," he writes. While the first motive in the quartet is borrowed from one of his own songs ("The Minstrel's Song"), it is not true that, as even his Norwegian biographer erroneously states, he has helped himself to folk-tunes: "alles ist erfunden, nichts benutzt," he informs me.

The antics of the academic critics over this quartet are amusing. Dr. Hanslick, whom we found enthusiastic over the "Peer Gynt" and "Holberg" Suites, draws the line at the dissonances in opus 27. He admits that "every movement in this quartet is full of life and 'go,' the romanza, indeed, written in the most agreeable folk-mood, being so charming that we even pardon its uncouth middle part"; but the discords! "the composer betrays a truly childish pleasure in everything that sounds ugly, and when he has hatched out a particularly juicy dissonance, he clings to it for dear life."*

* Dr. Hanslick wrote in the same vein all his life regarding those Wagner dissonances which, like Grieg's, delight most modern music lovers. He seems to have really suffered physical agony. When Antonin Dvorák was living in New York I once happened to talk with him about the famous Viennese critic, when he sat down at the piano and played a series of discords. "Do you like these?" he asked. "I think they are delicious," I replied. "I like them too," he said, "but Hanslick thought them dreadful and begged me not to use them."

Other critics of the academic persuasion have found Grieg's quartet sinfully unascetic and unchambermusic-like because it "goes beyond the proper sphere" of such music by a quasi-orchestral richness of colouring here and there. Schubert, the greatest of the chamber music writers, and Dvořák have been censured for the same trait, incredible as it may seem. It is one of the funniest things in the history of musical criticism. If it is considered a marvel of genius when a Liszt, a Rubinstein, or a Paderewski overcomes the inherent tonal limitations of the pianoforte and suggests diverse other instruments, is it not also a token of genius to be able to overcome the monotony of four stringed instruments and make the hearer wonder if some horn or oboe player is not concealed somewhere? Why should progress in the art of varied colouring be debarred from chamber music when it is welcomed in the orchestra?

X

COMPOSITIONS FOR PIANOFORTE

THE A minor concerto for piano has perhaps done more even than the 'Peer Gynt' Suites to establish the fame of its composer. As it has been referred to repeatedly in the preceding pages of this book, a few more words must suffice. It was composed in the Danish village Sölleröd, when Grieg was twenty-five years old, and is characterised by a juvenile freshness of invention combined with mature technical skill and a polish that few artists acquire so early in life. Possibly Schjelderup goes too far in declaring that this "wonderful concerto is perhaps the most perfect amalgam of piano and orchestra ever achieved by a tone-poet": but it is certainly a model in the way in which it avoids both of the common defects of being either a symphony with pianoforte accompaniment or a show-piece for the soloist with orchestral accompanist. It is, above all things, good music—delightful music, provided it is played by one who understands its deep poetic spirit. Pianists whose chief aim is to astonish the natives with their digital dexterity should (and do) avoid it. Since Liszt had his enthusiasm aroused by it, in 1870, many thousands have been affected in the same way, Not all, to be sure. F. Niecks wrote in 1879: "It presents a strange mingling of the pathetic with the grotesque. In deportment and style nothing can be more unlike classical dignity and development of thought." But perhaps Prof. Niecks himself

would hardly endorse this opinion to-day.* The world moves, and Liszt foresaw in what direction it would move.

An earlier work than the concerto is the sonata for pianoforte, opus 7. If this was actually written after the song, "I love thee" (op. 5), it is surprising that there should be so much less merit in its themes than in that splendid song. But even if not enamoured of it, one cannot but take its part against the charge that it lacks "organic unity," because there are "too many themes in it." The academic idea of a sonata is that it should be "organically evolved from a few principal motives"; but in this sonata, "if you look at the first movement, you will find that the first part contains, beside the principal subject, five or six, one may say independent, groups every one of which is distinguished by a phrase or motive of its own." That, certainly, does look dark for Grieg; and, what is worse, the same multiplicity of themes characterises other works of his in sonata form. It is absolutely inexcusable. What would you say if it had been customary for novelists, a century ago, never to have more than two persons in a chapter, and a modern iconoclast came along and put in five or six? Would not such a writer be abhorred by all decent people? †

* As a matter of fact, nine years after he had written the above, in the *Musical Record*, he exclaimed in the same periodical (May 1, 1888): "Again the Concerto, op. 16, it is life itself in its press and stress . . . Grieg . . . is a true poet and has added another string to our lyre."

† That Mr. Niecks should have made the above cited stricture is the more surprising since he himself admits on another page that a work may be "beautiful and truly artistic" without being written in what he is pleased to call "a strictly logical style." "Even in the larger forms," he adds, "a looser—what we may call a novelistic—treatment has its *raison d'être*." Now, here was a truly luminous, in fact an epoch-making thought in musical æsthetics, which it is a great pity Mr. Niecks did not develop, for his own benefit and that of his academic colleagues. The plain truth is, that the critics in general, in estimating a composer's rank, attach a great deal too much importance to questions of form. If it were really true that,

The third violin sonata (opus 45) was the last work in sonata form written by Grieg. For pianoforte he wrote only one cyclic composition, the juvenile sonata. Herein he followed the romantic spirit of the times, which demanded shorter, more concentrated pieces. It is well known that even the conservative Brahms wrote pianoforte sonatas only in the earliest stage of his career (op. 1, 2, 5); thereafter he composed ballads, rhapsodies, fantasias, intermezzi, and other short pieces. Chopin wrote no operas, oratorios, or symphonies, and only a few sonatas, yet Saint-Saëns has said of him that he "revolutionised the divine art and paved the way for all modern music." Among the minor professionals there are, to be sure, still quite a number who are capable of "shrugging their shoulders" and exclaiming, "Yes, that humming bird is very beautiful, but of course it cannot be ranked as high as an ostrich. Don't you see how small it is?" Such men, if they happen to be writers for the press, will devote columns to every new elephantine "tone-poem" by the unmelodious Richard Strauss, while ignoring entirely a collection of ravishing new melodies like those in one of Grieg's last works, "The Mountain Maid," op. 67. However, the number is growing of those who do not fancy a painted house to be

as Mr. Hadow says regarding Chopin, "in structure he is a child, playing with a few simple types," that does not prevent him from being the greatest as well as the most popular of all the composers for pianoforte. Fifth-rate composers like Lachner and Onslow wrote hundreds of pieces in "strictly logical sonata form," yet that did not make them either great or popular. Of a hundred cultivated music-lovers in a concert hall ninety-five have no more interest in the anatomy of music (form) than they have in botany when attending a flower show. Music is primarily an art (a matter of beauty and emotion), not a science. Grieg's strength, as Mr. Niecks well remarks, "lies in the freshness and novelty of his ideas." That is what makes him a genius—one of the greatest, one of the most prolific, of all musical creators. Form can be taught and learned; the creating of "fresh and novel ideas" cannot: it is a gift from heaven; it is that which distinguishes genius from talent.

a greater work of art than a Japanese vase simply because it is bigger and "more universal."

Of short pieces for the pianoforte Grieg has given to the world over a hundred, many of which are as artistic specimens of workmanship and polish as any Japanese vase. Sixty-six of these, fortunately, can now be had for a few shillings in one volume, comprising the ten sets of lyrical pieces ("Lyrische Stücke," edition Peters). The opus numbers (12, 38, 43, 47, 54, 57, 62, 65, 68, 71), indicate that these pieces represent every stage of their composer's creative activity, from the earliest to the latest. The gems of the first water are to be found in all of these periods; the later one includes such jewels as No. 41, "Homesickness;" 42, the dainty "Sylphe," with exquisite modulations; 48, the quaintly archaic yet modern "Gratitude:" 47, the joyous expectant "Homeward;" 49, the sturdy rustic "Peasant's Song;" 53, the exuberant, brilliant "Wedding Day at Troldhaugen;" 57, the highly poetic "Evening in the Mountains," with its subtle suggestion in the opening bars of rustic motives in Wagner's operas—the Shepherd's tunes in "Tristan" and "Tannhäuser;" 58, the exquisitely delicate and dreamy "At the Cradle," a marvel of beauty. These and their neighbours have, for the most part, not yet found their way to the concert halls, but their time will come, as they are not in any way inferior to the earlier and more familiar numbers, among which the best known perhaps is the "Berceuse" (9), concerning which Dr. William Mason writes drolly; "Grieg's baby—a robust little fellow, with a touch of temper, and a pair of healthy lungs, which he does not hesitate to use upon occasion—is evidently at home in the cottage of a peasant. . . . The cradle is rocked here in a different manner. Binary and ternary rhythms combined, and strong melodic and harmonic contrasts of sudden occurrence, bear the impress of Grieg's personality."

No useful purpose would be served by passing in review

all of the sixty-six piano pieces in this collection with the brevity demanded by the scope of this little volume. We may mention, however, some more of those to whom we must, in Baedeker fashion, affix two stars: the dainty "Butterfly;" the "Solitary Traveller," Grieg in every bar; the equally characteristic, deep-felt "In my Native Country;" the deservedly famous and popular "Eroticon;" the celestial "To the Spring," with its ravishing left-hand melody and a superb climax; the pensive, mildly melancholy "Valse Impromptu;" the superb "Album-leaf," of rare originality, and as wondrous in its harmonic and contrapuntal miniature work as Bach or Franz; the quaint and ravishingly Griegian "Melodie;" the rustic, exciting, fascinatingly harmonised "Springdans" (28); the plaintive "Elegie," another sample of the Norwegians' art of making every harmonic voice melodious; the doleful tune of the "Shepherd Boy;" the whirling, boisterous "Peasant March" (31); the altogether delightful "March of the Dwarfs," a striking musical embodiment of Norse folklore; the "Notturmo" (33) with exquisitely dreamy harmonies; and, the quaintest and most daring of Grieg's audacities, the "Bell-Ringing," a most ingenious imitation on the piano of the shrill overtone dissonances of a church bell. This piece seems to have amazed even some of the Griegites, one of whom remarks that "the succession of parallel fifths in the piece entitled 'Glockenklang' is too much even for the *fin de siècle* ear of a hearer thoroughly imbued with the spirit of modern music." We have seen, however, that the great Wagnerian conductor Anton Seidl admired it so much that he made an orchestral version of it. Caviare to the general, his composition is to the connoisseur one of the most delightful examples of programme music in existence. It is interesting to note that the same "Glockenklang" opens the Peasant Dance of opus 63, and occurs elsewhere in his works.

Grieg's critical sense and good taste are manifested in

the fact that there is an almost unprecedentedly large proportion of high-class pieces in the collections of his compositions. The trivial, the banal, the commonplace are excluded. In my copy of the "Lyrische Stücke" there are only half-a-dozen that are not marked with at least one "star of excellence." Each player will, of course, do his own "starring"; but it is well to bear in mind that this music, simple and easy though much of it is, must not be judged at a first hearing. Some pieces in my copy that were at first unmarked now have two stars! No two amateurs will agree in all cases as to where the stars and the double-stars belong; but all will find that the stars grow more and more numerous on acquaintance, as they do on a dark night if we gaze intently at the sky. Delicacy of touch and tenderness of feeling however are absolutely necessary if one would get acquainted with the best there is in these pieces.

One of the most remarkable traits of Grieg is that although he had an invalid body nearly all his life, his artist soul was always healthy; there is not a trace of the morbid or mawkish in his music, but, on the contrary, a superb virility and an exuberant joyousness such as are supposed to be inseparable from robust health. The tenderness just referred to is not incompatible with this sturdy virility; tenderness is a modern trait of the best manhood; Homer's heroes had none of it. An exquisite specimen of this tenderness belonging to the composer's last period is that ravishing piece, the second of the Cradle Songs (No. 58). Another example, of the more dreamy kind, is the still later "Peace of the Woods" (No. 63; op. 71), which is like a nocturne written by Chopin after playing Grieg for an hour. From first to last, indeed, the Chopin influence is the strongest in Grieg: much stronger than the Schumann influence, which is noticeable only in the earliest stage. Some of the titles suggest Schumann's method ("Butterfly," "Shep-



GRIEG AND DE GREEF, THE BELGIAN PIANIST

herd-Boy," "Gade," "Secret," "Once upon a Time"); but whereas Schumann found the poetic titles for his pieces after they were written, there is every reason to believe that Grieg always had his subjects in mind first; the realism of his music attests that.

Concerning the three pieces entitled "In my Native Country," "Home-sickness" and "Homeward," Hermann Kretzschmar has aptly remarked that whereas the first is simply an expression of feeling, in the others the longing is overpowered by the "memories of home which the composer's energetic virile imagination conjures up in a thousand tones." Norway, indeed, is the playground to which Grieg ever returns. Here are Hallings and Springdances and Marches of Dwarfs, and Wedding Marches, and Peasant Songs and other superlative specimens of Norse music, all, of course, Grieg's own invention. This fact must be emphasised. [In an essay on Grieg which disfigures an American book, the preposterous statement is made that between the fiftieth and the seventieth of his opus numbers "there is little but representation of Norwegian tunes."] As a matter of fact, 64 and 66 are the only two of these opus numbers in which borrowed tunes are used; the other eighteen are not only Grieg's own, but they include some of his masterworks. Because of his ill-health, he has written less in the later decades of his career than in the earlier ones; but there has been no falling off in quality.*

As previously intimated, there is probably more of the Norwegian national colouring in Grieg's pianoforte pieces than in his other works. The theorists have used their spectroscopes to analyse this local colour, but in doing so

* Dr. Johnson, on being asked by a lady what had made him define a certain word in his dictionary in such and such a way, replied: "Ignorance, madame, pure ignorance." If certain critics were equally frank in their confessions, their picturesque and varied ignorance regarding Grieg and his works would fill a volume almost as big as the doctor's dictionary.

they have not made clear what is Norway's and what is Grieg's. The bold leaps in the melody, the sudden changes in the rhythm, the commingling of major and minor, the frequent ending on the fifth instead of the tonic, the tempo rubato, the brief themes, the "rude rusticity of bare fifths," are common to both, but the striking harmonic idiosyncrasies (which cannot be described without the use of music type) are Grieg's own. The most elaborate discussion of them is contained in a book previously referred to, Georg Capellen's "*Die Freiheit oder Unfreiheit der Töne und Intervalle*," wherein twenty-six pages are devoted to an analysis of the first twenty-nine of the "Lyrical Pieces." The author contends that "a really satisfactory theoretical explanation of Grieg's music in accordance with the methods now in vogue is unthinkable, and has not even been attempted, so far as I know." Whatever one may think of Capellen's own system, he deserves credit for calling the attention of scholars and students to the extraordinarily varied originality of Grieg's harmonic progressions. Yet these wonderful new discoveries in the realm of harmony the myopic critics have sneered at as "mannerisms!" Mozart, too, was in his day accused of having mannerisms; but he retorted with imperturbable good humour that if his compositions assumed a form and "manier" that made them unmistakably Mozartish, it was with them, presumably, as with his nose, which was of a certain size and curve that made it Mozartish and unlike that of other people.

As no one can hear a Bach fugue or a Chopin mazurka or a Wagner opera without exclaiming: "That is German and Bach—Polish and Chopin—German and Wagner"—so no one can hear a piece or song by the great Bergen composer without exclaiming: "that is Norwegian and Grieg." The hall-mark of his genius is to be found not only in his own pieces but in the Norwegian folk-tunes arranged by him and incorporated in op. 17, 35, 64, 66, 72. In

transplanting these to the keyboard of the pianoforte he seemed to divine the harmonies latent in the popular tunes. In other words, he made his harmonies as unconventional as the borrowed melodies, writing chords and modulations, such as the peasant originators of these melodies would have used had they got as far as the harmonic stage of music—and had they been men of genius.* Only a genius of the first rank could have written, for instance, the ravishingly beautiful harmonies on page 5 of the *Norwegian Dances*, op. 35, in the version for pianoforte solo; a page which alone would suffice to make its author immortal. (I suspect that the melody in this cantabile also is by Grieg, although the germ of it may be in op. 17, p. 20.) To get this piece at its best it should be played in the original version for four hands. Much of the other music has been arranged for four hands by the composer himself, who has shown a special gift for this, which is rare even among the greatest masters.† For two hands, too, Grieg has arranged many of his own works not written for pianoforte, and in doing so he has shown a skill equalled only by Liszt. Everywhere and always he makes the piano speak its own purest idiom, except when—again rivalling Liszt, who transferred the sounds of gypsy instruments to the pianoforte—he lets you hear, seemingly, the Norse fele, langleike, or lur. As a German critic has remarked, whatever he has written for pianoforte “ist handlich und fingerig, griffig und spritzig, singt und klingt.” Among the best arrangements are those of some of his songs (four sets, issued as op. 41 and 52). One of these, it is true, marks a

* An interesting application of Grieg's method to the tunes of the N. American Indians may be found in some of the songs of the talented American composer Harvey Worthington Loomis.

† See the Grieg Katalog, p. 14, for a list of these arrangements, and read what is said on this point regarding Schubert, Grieg, and others on p. 259 of Eschmann's “Wegweiser durch die Klavier-Literatur”; a guide for the pianist, which also classifies Grieg's pianoforte pieces according to their difficulty.

temporary aberration of taste : the pianistic embellishment of "The Princess" is not in harmony with the spirit of that lovely song. Such lapses occur in the works of most of the great masters, Beethoven included, in cases where the theme of an adagio or a funeral march is decorated with showy variations.*

For piano solo there are, beside the 66 "Lyrische Stücke" and the arrangements of original works and of folk-songs, a considerable number of separate pieces and collections. Pre-eminent among them are the superb "Ballade," op. 24, "in form of variations on a Norwegian melody;" the fanciful "Humoresken," op. 6; the popular "Album-blätter," op. 28; the "Valses Caprices," op. 37—all of these being concert-hall favourites; the funeral march in memory of Nordraak; the "Improvisata," op. 19, &c. Last and least comes opus 1, although even this has its interest as a presage of the future.†

* Grieg has been harshly criticised for another of his arrangements: his adding of a second piano to several of Mozart's pianoforte sonatas, in order, as he says, "to give them a tonal effect appealing to our modern ears." Only a pedant can object to such a proceeding, which helps to re-awaken interest in neglected works of the old masters. As Grieg explains in his splendid article on Mozart, in the *Century Magazine* of November 1897, he did not change a single one of Mozart's notes, and he could see no reason why one should raise an outcry over his desire to attempt a modernisation as one way of showing his admiration for an old master.

† As this book goes to press, Grieg's publisher announces a new collection of pianoforte pieces entitled "Stimmungen" (Moods), op. 73.

XI

VOCAL COMPOSITIONS

WHEN Hans von Bülow called Grieg the "Chopin of the North," he doubtless had in mind the great refinement of style, the abhorrence of the commonplace, the rare melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic originality, and the "exotic" nationalism which these two masters have in common. Chopin, no doubt, excels Grieg in some points, in others Grieg excels Chopin, notably in his rare faculty for orchestral colouring, and in his gift to the world of 125 songs which only two or three masters have equalled. Chopin's seventeen songs deserve much more attention than they have so far received ; but they are a mere episode in his career, whereas Grieg has in his "Lieder" given us his very life blood. Much as I admire his instrumental works, it is in his lyric songs that I consider him most frequently at his very best. If I devote less space to them than to the instrumental works it is because they share the characteristics of Grieg's other compositions, which have been sufficiently dwelt on in the preceding pages, wherefore little remains but the agreeable task of calling attention to the best by affixing our stars and double stars of commendation. Before taking the songs in hand, a few longer scores for singers call for notice.

"*At the Cloister Gate.*"—Shortly after returning from Rome, where Liszt had done so much to encourage him, Grieg composed a work which he called "At the Cloister Gate," and dedicated it to that far-sighted master. It appeared

in print as opus 20, and is a setting of a scene from Björnson's "Arnljot Gelline," for soprano and alto solo, female chorus, and orchestra. The text is a dialogue between a nun and a girl who knocks for admission at the gate of a convent late at night. The girl relates that she is from the Far North; she had a lover, but he slew her own father; she fled, and in passing the cloister she heard women's voices singing the "Hallelujah." "Me-thought they sang of peace; it soothed my soul. . . . Unlock, unlock, I love him, wretched I, must love him till I die." Then the celestial choir of nuns is heard inviting her to come in from grief and sin to God. An admirable subject for musical treatment, which inspired Grieg to one of his best works. In all musical literature there are few things so sweetly pathetic, so like a maiden in distress, as the main theme of this composition, which is first sounded when to the question, "Who's knocking so late at the cloister door?" she answers, "Homeless maiden from far away." And this theme, with other sadly beautiful material, is elaborated in a score which is a masterly amalgam of all the arts of the musician. Yet—and I blush for the profession in saying it—in an experience as a critic of a quarter of a century I have not once had an opportunity of hearing this work except on my own piano.

"*Recognition of Land.*"—Another score that ought to be (and by-and-by will be) heard in our concert halls every season, is the setting of Björnson's poem, "Landkjending" for male chorus, baritone solo, and orchestra (op. 31). These two choral works might be advantageously included in the same programme; they would reveal Grieg as a master in the realm of the pathetic in the first work, of the heroic in the second. In the "Recognition of Land" we are on the vessel which takes Olaf Trygvason to the North. The son of a Norwegian king, he had been educated in England, and there became a Christian. In the year 995 he returned to Norway and was elected king after some

hard battles. Björnson's poem shows this Norse Columbus and his men eagerly watching for the first signs of land—"the snow peaks o'er cloud banks peeping." At last Norway lies before them, with its green fields, its dark forests, its noisy waterfalls; and Olaf hails the landing place as the spot to found his kingdom and teach his Faith to his heathen countrymen. Grieg's music is superbly virile. As the French Closson remarks, here we have *une véritable grandeur, un caractère épique et triomphal*. "One is carried away by an irresistible feeling of enthusiasm, an ardour that is both religious and warlike. The chorus is treated majestically, with large and simple harmonies; it is one of those works that involuntarily recall the spirit of the heroic popular ballads."

When once this composition has been acclimated in our concert halls the singers will become eager to try, also, the opus preceding it—the Album for Male Choir, containing twelve part-songs after Norwegian folk-melodies, and the two numbers from "Sigurd Jorsalfar" (opus 22) for solo, male chorus, and orchestra. The (unaccompanied) part songs are not so simple in their intervals and harmonies as Mendelssohn's, but their beauty makes them quite worth the study they demand. Most of them are written for baritone solo, with choir accompaniment, and the effect is often as entrancing as it is novel. Special attention must also be called here to "Der Bergentrückte," for baritone solo, string orchestra and two horns. The text, based on a very old poem, inspired Grieg, while living at Lofthus, to one of his best efforts. In his own words: "This short piece contains some drops of heart-blood."

"*Olaf Trygvason*."—When Björnson heard Grieg's music to his "At the Cloister Gate" he was "beside himself with ecstasy," and promptly expressed a strong desire to write an opera libretto for him. Soon thereafter Grieg was, accordingly, supplied with the first act of an opera entitled "Olaf Trygvason," upon which he at once set to work.

Björnson, however, did not finish the libretto, but switched off to a modern comedy, whereat his friend, thus left in the lurch, was so much offended that he avoided him for several years. It was lucky, however, that the eminent poet did abandon this opera book. Whereas in his "At the Cloister Gate" and "Recognition of Land" he had unknowingly provided admirably for a musical setting, his deliberately-undertaken libretto was not a success; it contains splendid poetic lines, but it is clumsily constructed, there is too much repetition, and too great prominence is given to the chorus. This is to be regretted, for the subject in itself provided splendid opportunities. Olaf Trygvason is the most interesting hero in old Norwegian history. Carlyle referred to him as "still a shining figure to us, the wildly beautifulest man in body and soul that one has ever heard of in the North." He conquered more by his personality than by his sword. It was at Trondhjem that his career of conquest and conversion to Christianity first met with serious opposition, and the beginning of this conflict is portrayed in this operatic fragment.

The scene is placed in an ancient Norse temple. The Vikings are celebrating their heathen rites and offering their immolations; there are invocations to the gods and imprecations on the enemy, varied by a weird dance in which the women are swung over the temple fires. In the music which Grieg wrote for these wild scenes there is less than his usual spontaneity of invention, but there is much interesting evidence of a genuine gift for operatic composition. Even as played on the pianoforte, it impresses one with its strong dramatic touches; and the orchestra must emphasise these strongly. The introduction, for instance, to cite Schjelderup, "is in its simplicity full of spirit. The threatening bass, the horns persisting on the same tone, the dark rolling of the kettledrums, and the tremolo of the strings, give us a good picture of the wild gloom of heathendom.' In the address which he delivered

on the occasion of Grieg's sixtieth birthday, Björnson intimated that only one more step was needed for Norway to reach the greatest of the musical forms—the opera. It was partly his fault that that step was not taken.* As it is, the “Olaf” fragment is not likely ever to be heard, except in the concert hall, for which the composer has arranged it. Wagner has so habituated modern audiences to sombre moods that they will not mind this score being, in the words of Closson, “continuellement farouche, sombre, même dans les explosions de joie et de triomphe.” Philip Hale was impressed by the “wild, unearthly” quality of the music, and by its element of ancient mystery, which recalled to him the lines of Walt Whitman :

“I see the burial cairns of Scandinavian warriors ;

I see them raised high with stones, by the marge of restless oceans,

that the dead men's spirits, when they wearied of their quiet graves, might rise up through the mounds and gaze on the tossing billows, and be refreshed by storms, immensity, liberty, action.”

Songs.—“His lovely and too little known songs are unique in their delicate voicing of the tenderest, most elusive personal feeling, as well as in their consummate *finesse* of workmanship,” writes one of the least sympathetic critics of Grieg. Here, indeed, we are on ground where a difference of opinion is simply inconceivable among those who really know these Lieder, which surprisingly few do.

* Ibsen also once spoke to Grieg of an opera libretto called “Olaf Liliekrands,” which he had partly written: “It was originally intended for another musician, but I would sooner give it to you than to any one else. In a year's time it shall be finished and placed at your disposal.” But Grieg never received it. How could he write an opera if the poets thus left him in the lurch? To be sure, his life-long invalidism made it practically impossible for him, as before intimated, to undertake and carry out so arduous a task as an operatic score. To cite his own comment, made in a private communication ; “Leider hat meine Gesundheit grössere Arbeiten, wonach ich mich gesehnt habe, unmöglich gemacht.”

With a few exceptions, the professional singers have heretofore neglected them, partly because of an exaggerated fear of their unusual melodic intervals, which a few days of study would enable them to master. When, after regaling myself with Grieg's songs, I attend some of the public recitals and note the commonplace programmes in vogue, I feel like one who sees people walking in a brook-bed gathering pebbles, blind to the diamonds and rubies they might pick up in their place.

As the four numbers of opus 1 are least in merit among Grieg's pianoforte pieces, so his opus 2, containing four Songs for Alto, is the least interesting of his groups of Lieder. Yet Prof. Hugo Riemann, in his "History of Music since Beethoven," declares that "some of Grieg's first works (*i.e.*, the songs opus 2) speak a mighty tone-language which suggests Schubert in his greatest moments." This is altogether too high praise. I myself believe that Grieg in some of his songs equals Schubert at his best; indeed, I think he should and will be ranked ultimately as second to Schubert only; but it is in his later works that he rises to such heights, not in the earliest ones, in which he was still a little afraid to rely on his own wings.* Grieg has written songs as superior to those of opus 2 as Wagner's "Tristan" is superior to his "Rienzi."

The number of Grieg's Lieder is 125; among these there are fewer that fall below par than in the list of any other song-writer. "Less would have been more" can never be said of the greatest of living composers; his critical conscience did not allow him to write unless he had something

* Riemann's criticism was destined to provide an amusing illustration of that parroting propensity among musical critics, which accounts for the stubborn survival of so many foolish notions regarding Grieg. In the Scandinavian number of "Die Musik" R. M. Breithaupt remarks that "Noch in op. 2 sind Züge die Schubert's künstlerisch höchstem Schaffen nahe kommen." ("In opus 2 there are still traits that approach Schubert's highest creative moments.")

new to say. A strictly chronological list of the songs cannot be furnished here, as the productions of various dates are mixed in the "Albums," and many are not dated at all; but there is sufficient evidence to show that the master songs are pretty equally divided between the early, the middle, and the last periods. As a matter of course, no one who wishes to make the acquaintance of Grieg's songs will be so foolish as to proceed chronologically. The best thing by far to do is to get first the fourth of the Albums (Peters edition). It contains a dozen songs, all but two or three of which deserve the double-star of highest praise. Surely that man hath no music in his soul who can familiarise himself with these twelve songs without wanting to hasten to the nearest music-seller's to buy everything for the voice Grieg ever wrote. The last of the dozen, "My Goal," contains a slight suggestion of Schubert's "Erl-king." In the rest it would be difficult to find a bar that is not unadulterated Grieg—a new wonderland for those who have never opened these inspired pages. Concerning the poems in this collection, Grieg gave me this information in 1890: "I was all aflame with enthusiasm when I became acquainted, in the spring of 1880, with the poems of Vinje, which embody a deep philosophy of life, and in course of eight to ten days I composed not only the songs contained in the fourth volume, but others by the same poet which are not yet in print. A. O. Vinje was a peasant by birth. He attempted with his prose works to enlighten the Norwegian people; and these writings, together with his poems, gave him a great national importance."

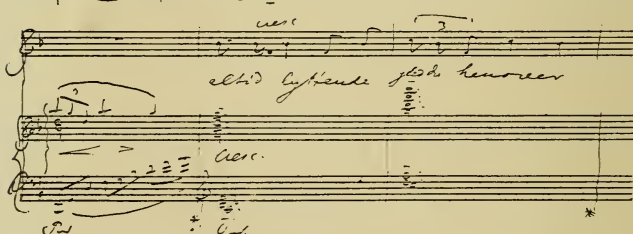
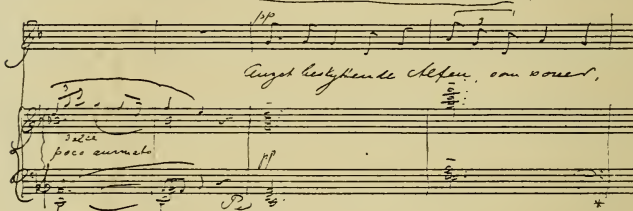
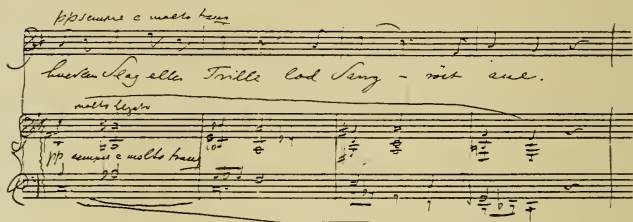
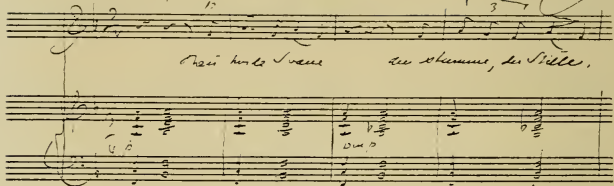
These twelve songs represent the high-water mark of Grieg's genius. Their emotional range is wide. Two of them, "A Fair Vision" and "The First Thing," are love songs; a third, "The Old Mother," a charmingly melodious musical apotheosis of filial affection. "Faith" is a solemn religious choral. A contagious patriotic feeling

predominates in "The Berry," "My Goal," and "On the Way Home," the last of which is of indescribable beauty, especially in its final four bars, in which the composer, overwhelmed by the memories of his youth, indulges in a fervent and glorious outburst of feeling for which few parallels exist in the whole range of music. In most of these songs there is a touch of melancholy, which is greatly emphasised in the remaining ones, reaching a climax in "False Friendship," which is a counterpart to Schubert's "Doppelgänger," with the weirdest of harmonies. "The Riverside" is one of the best songs to study the quaint melodic intervals and harmonies which constitute the physiognomy of Grieg, and which familiarity makes more and more fascinating. Grieg's songs wear well. "Spring-tide" and "The Wounded Heart" are the two gems which the composer has given an orchestral setting ("Two Elegiac Melodies for String Orchestra"). The profound melancholy of the poems explains the solemn strains of the music, but as there are no verses to go with orchestral versions the composer deemed it advisable to elucidate these by changing the titles to "The Last Spring" and "Heart Wounds."

It would be pleasant to dwell on others of the two-star and one-star songs in the Grieg Albums, but the limits of space forbid. For some details the author may be permitted to refer to the chapter on Grieg in his "Songs and Song Writers." The five Albums contain altogether sixty numbers. The first includes the romantic and well-known "The Princess" (how grandly in this the music sinks with the setting sun!), two cradle songs, of which the second (No. 7) is one of the most ineffably sad works in existence (the baby's mother is dead); and "The Odalisque," a most effective concert piece. The second Album contains the most popular of Grieg's songs (at present): "I Love Thee," which might have been written by Schumann in one of his best moments. The other

Langevåg og Klangeballe. (En Suite.
Kant. Væsen)

So. red. 1894



FACSIMILE OF GRIEG'S SONG "A SWAN"
By permission of the publishers, C. F. Peters, Leipzig

[illegible]

By permission of the publishers, C. F. Peters, Leipzig

numbers in Album II. are all one-star songs. In the third Album all the songs are marked (in my copy) with a star, and five of them have two stars. Two of these, "Solvejg's Lied" and "The Swan," vie in popularity with "I Love Thee." Regarding "The Swan" (of which the poetic meaning may not be clear to him who reads and runs) the composer emphasises the fact that the words "At Last thou Sangest" must be sung *sempre ff*, if possible even with a *crescendo*, and by no means *diminuendo* and *piano*. There is a superb climax in these two bars, when the swan, silent all its life, sings at last. "The Minstrel's Song" embodies the favourite Norse legend of the river sprite teaching the magic love-compelling art of song in return for the singer's salvation. Grieg's music starts with a tune in the true "Legendenton," and develops into a miniature music drama. "A Lovely Evening in Summer 'twas" presents a bright contrast to that minstrel lover (who loses his beloved as well as his soul); its fifteen bars are a vial containing some of that concentrated quintessence of melody and love of home, for the distillation of which Grieg has the best recipe. And what shall I say of the "First Primrose"? Songs of flowers and love and spring there are innumerable, but none more fresh, more spontaneous, dewy, fragrant, heartfelt, than this. Why it is never sung in public surpasses comprehension. It seems destined to become the most popular of Grieg's songs.

Volume V. of the Albums begins with "From Monte Pincio," which is, from some points of view, the greatest of Grieg's songs; musical word-painting there is here rivalling Liszt's "Loreley." Of course it is music of the future; the next generation will know and sing and love it. This Album also includes Solvejg's despairing "Cradle Song" (to which reference was made in Chapter IX.), and the heart-rending "At the Bier of a Young Woman," in which there are nine bars (the twelfth to the twentieth) that are like a vision of heaven. Few indeed are the song collections in

which the music-lover can come across a nugget of unalloyed genius like this.

Apart from the five Albums there are twelve separate collections of songs: op. 2, 10, 44, 48, 49, 58, 59, 60, 61 (seven *Kinderlieder*), 67, 69, 70. Conspicuous for individuality and charm among these is op. 44, "Aus Fjeld und Fjord" (see "Songs and Song Writers," p. 211). The Prologue is a fine specimen of recitative, while "Ragnhild" and "Ragna" are as tuneful and almost as simple as folk-songs, yet altogether Griegian. These also will be favourites in the concert halls of the future. Of the six numbers in op. 48 four are decorated with double stars; Nos. 1, 2, 3, 6. "Im Kahne," one of Lilli Lehmann's favourites, is included in op. 60. It is followed by one of the weirdest of Grieg's songs, "A Bird cried o'er the Lonely Sea," concerning which the composer informs me that the introductory bars embody a melodic-rhythmic motive which he heard from a gull in the Sognefjord. Another of Lilli Lehmann's concert numbers is the "Zickeltanz" (Kid-Dance) of op. 67. The gem of this late collection, however, is No. 2, "The Mountain Maid," which surely must appeal to every music lover, amateur or professional. It is a two-star song, so is the dirge, "At Mother's Grave," in op. 69, with thrilling, heart-rending harmonies, which clamour for orchestration; and another is "O Beware" in op. 70, the last but one of the Grieg songs published up to date, with the most fascinatingly quaint melody and sombre harmonies. The eighteen songs included in op. 67, 69 and 70 are twentieth-century compositions by a man born in 1843; yet they have all the freshness and spontaneity of youth.

This very imperfect sketch must suffice for the present; the author keenly feels its failure to do justice to the *Lieder*; he believes regarding these songs, with Closson, that "*presque tous sont à citer*"—nearly all are worth separate discussion.

XII

GRIEG'S ARTISTIC CREED—BIBLIOGRAPHY

UNLIKE most of the modern composers Edvard Grieg admires not only the great masters of the past but many of his contemporaries. He has expressed this appreciation partly in private letters, partly in magazine articles. His letters contain most interesting criticisms, while his few printed essays make one regret that his poor health curtailed his productiveness in the literary field as in the realm of music. His appreciation of living composers extends to his fellow Scandinavians, notably Svendsen, Sinding, Sjögren, and Lange-Müller. For French music he has, as previously stated, a special penchant. Of the Italians he admires particularly Verdi, on whom he wrote an article shortly after his death.* "With Verdi," he says, "is gone the last of the great ones, and if it were permissible to compare artistic greatness, I would say that Verdi was greater than either Bellini, Rossini, or Donizetti. I would go so far, even, as to say that side by side with Wagner he was, on the whole, the greatest dramatist of the century." He dwells on the national element in Verdi's music and on his admirable use of Egyptian local colour, in his masterwork, "Aïda." In "Otello" he finds "Shakspearean demoniacality." The temptation to cite must be reduced to one sample; it relates to "Otello":

"Among the many remarkable things in the instrumentation of this opera is the use made of the entire collective

* English version in Littell's *Living Age*, 1901, pp. 11-14.

orchestra apparatus for the production of a pianissimo, and a fear-inspiring pianissimo it is. This effect is, I think, new ; at any rate, I do not remember to have met with it in the works of any other master."

His appreciation of the gifts of Arthur Sullivan and several other English musicians was referred to in the first chapter. Never was a man's ability to enjoy what is good in the music of all countries less hampered than in his case. For the works of the Russian Tchaikovsky and the Bohemian Dvorák he feels an admiration which they reciprocated ; when Dvorák died, Grieg sent a beautiful letter of condolence to the stricken family. To the American MacDowell he has written letters of sympathetic appreciation. His feeling towards Paderewski and his art is expressed in an extract from a letter to the author of this volume (see the facsimile) written shortly after the railway collision which came near ending the Polish pianist-composer's career ; in English : " What has happened to Paderewski ? The papers say he is paralysed. Is it true ? I am heartily sorry that he is ill. I feel so much sympathy for his art. But—virtuosity revenges itself ! "

Of the masters of the past, Paderewski's countryman, Chopin, probably has had Grieg's warmest love throughout his life. It began in childhood, and in his Conservatory days, in particular, he was profoundly impressed " by the intense minor mood of the Slavic folk-music in Chopin's harmonies, and the sadness over the unhappy fate of his native land in his melodies." It is to be hoped he may find time and strength to write articles on Chopin, and on two others of his idols : Liszt and Bach.

Beside the paper on Verdi there are two essays of his which have appeared in a magazine—" Schumann " in the *Century* (January 1894), and " Mozart " in the same periodical for November 1897. While Schumann's name is at present known and loved throughout the civilised world, " it is not to be denied," writes Grieg, " that the best years

Was ist mit Paderewski?
Man liest, dass er erkrankt
ist. Ist es wahr? Es thut
mir herzlich leid, dass er
erkrankt ist. Ich habe
so viel Sympathie für
seine Kunst. Aber:
das Virtuosensthum rächt
sich!

FACSIMILE OF A NOTE ABOUT PADEREWSKI

of his artistic activity were lost without any comprehension of his significance, and when recognition at last began to come, Schumann's strength was broken. Of this melancholy fact I received a vivid impression when, in the year 1883, I called upon his famous wife, Clara Schumann, in Frankfort-on-the-Main. I fancied she would be pleased to hear of her husband's popularity in so distant a region as my native country, Norway; but in this I was mistaken. Her countenance darkened as she answered: 'Yes, *now*!'

With great acumen Grieg puts his finger on Schumann's chief artistic misdemeanour—an offence against his own genius; "it would have been better for Schumann if he had listened less to Mendelssohn's maxims and set more store by his own." With equal acumen he sets forth the greatness of Schumann's art, and then proceeds to defend him against the attacks of the *Bayreuther Blätter*, which, though signed by Joseph Rubinstein, were, he was convinced, inspired, and more than inspired, by Wagner himself. In the course of his remarks, Grieg pays his compliments to "that army of inflated arrogance which wrongfully have adopted the title of 'Wagnerians' and Lisztians"; expressly discriminating, however, "between the true and genuine admirers of these two mighty masters and the howling horde which calls itself '—ians.'" Naturally, this brought down on the bold Norwegian's head the howls of the horde referred to. In the "Mozart" article there is an echo of this disturbance, but most of it is devoted to a loving analysis of the great German's genius. Mozart, too, like Schumann, "was not esteemed at his true value while he lived," and in his case, too, efforts at belittlement have been made in our day. Grieg confesses that he himself "loved Mozart, then for a time lost him, but found him again, nevermore to lose him."

An editorial note that was prefixed to the article on Mozart included the statement that "in artistic convictions and principles, and most powerfully in patriotic instinct,

Grieg has necessarily found himself opposed to the Wagnerian propaganda." This gave Grieg a welcome opportunity to explain his real attitude, which he did in a letter to the *New York Times*, in which he said: "My artistic convictions and principles are not in any way 'opposed to the Wagnerian propaganda.' I have pointed out the mistaken tactics of the Wagnerians with regard to Schumann and Mozart, but I myself make propaganda for Wagner wherever I can, without being an adherent of the so-called Wagnerism. I am, in fact, no believer in any kind of 'isms.' I am neither more nor less than an admirer of Wagner—so ardent an admirer, indeed, that there can scarcely be a greater." When he first had an opportunity in his youth to hear "Tannhäuser," he attended fourteen performances in succession. While there are no echoes of Wagner's *ideas* in his music, he frankly admits in a private letter that in the songs of his second period, and still more in those of the third, he endeavoured to learn from Wagner how to perfect his declamation.*

His ardent devotion to Wagner does not prevent him from enjoying the antipodal Brahms. To him he pays his compliments in the Schumann article; and in a letter dated December 21, 1900, he takes his part against my strictures in 'Songs and Song-Writers.' I may say that I have not changed my mind in the least, wherefore I deserve the more credit for printing the following excerpt. I console myself with Grieg's admission that in the case of his own songs my preferences coincide with his own.

"I confess that your judgment of Brahms was a great

* Reference was made in Chapter VI. to the fact that Grieg was one of the pilgrims to Bayreuth in 1876. He wrote a series of articles on the Nibelung Festival for the *Bergensposten* newspaper, in which he was, as he says, "at the same time wildly enthusiastic and severely critical." "Without being a Wagnerite, I was at that time what I am now: an adherent, nay, a worshipper of the might genius." Neither these articles nor other newspaper criticisms written by him have so far been reprinted.

disappointment to me. That you, with your great, wide horizon, have failed to discover the real Brahms, is really quite too extraordinary, and shows how the most many-sided men have their limitations. For me there is no doubt concerning Brahms. A landscape, torn by mists and clouds, in which I can see ruins of old churches, as well as of Greek temples—that is Brahms. The necessity of placing him by the side of Bach and Beethoven is as incomprehensible to me as the attempt to reduce him *ad absurdum*. The great must be great, and a comparison with other great ones must always be unsatisfactory.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE two principal treatises on Grieg up to date (1905): Gerhard Schjelderup's "Edvard Grieg og hans Vaerker" (Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag in Copenhagen, 1903), and Ernest Closson's "Edvard Grieg et la Musique Scandinave" (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1892), are mentioned in the Preface to this volume. Thomas Tapper refers, in *The Musician*, to a brief work in Dutch, by Dr. J. de Jong; this I have not seen. La Mara wrote an excellent nine-page article for the "Grieg Katalog" (Peters), and there is a good introduction to the "Lyrische Stücke" by Hermann Kretzschmar. In Norwegian there are, beside Schjelderup's volume two books with accurate articles, one by Almar Grönwold, the other Salmonsens's Encyclopædia (article by Holter). Henry Maubel (Maurice Belval) has an appreciative chapter in his "Préfaces pour des Musiciens" (Paris: Fischbacher). Sara Bull and Philip Hale contributed good biographic and critical articles to "Great Composers and their Works" (Boston: J. B. Millet Co., 1891). Mr. Hale informs me that were he to re-write his article now he would make it still more favourable. There are chapters on Grieg in Lawrence Gilman's "Phases of Modern Music";* Daniel Gregory Mason's "From Grieg to Brahms" (this will anger those who know Grieg and fail to enlighten those who do not); "Songs and Song-

* John Lane: The Bodley Head, London. New York: John Lane Company.

Writers," by the author of the present volume; G. T. Ferris's "Great German Composers" (New York, 1905); R. T. Sharp's "Makers of Music" (London: 1898). George Capellen's "Die Freiheit oder Unfreiheit der Töne und Intervalle" (Leipzig: C. F. Kahnt, 1904), contains a 26-page analysis of the first four issues of the "Lyrische Stücke."

Of articles in magazines and musical periodicals the following may be mentioned: "Temple Bar" (A. E. Keeton), 1898; "Illustrated London News," 1898; "Monthly Musical Record" (1879, 1888, F. Niecks); "Leisure Hour," 1889 (M. B. Foster); "Spectator," 1888, 235; "Saturday Review" (J. F. Runciman), 1897; "Music" (Chicago), vol. 13; "The Musician" (Philadelphia), 1902; "North American Review" (A. M. Wergeland), 1902; "Musical Times" (London), 1888, 1894; "The Nationalism of Grieg" (H. E. Krehbiel), a condensed reprint from New York "Tribune"; "Woman at Home" (W. A. Gray), 1904; "Die Musik" (Berlin), Skandinavisches Heft, 1904; "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik," 1897, Nos. 26-30, a series of articles by Otto Schmid, based on information received from Grieg himself. "Allgemeine Musik Zeitung" (Berlin), June, 1903. "Century" (Dr. William Mason), 1894; "Musical Courier" (New York), vol. 46; "Masters in Music" (Boston), Grieg Number, 1903. There is also a pamphlet "Til Edvard Grieg's 60 Aars Foedelsdag. Fest Brochure." Bergen: John Grieg.

EDVARD GRIEG'S WORKS

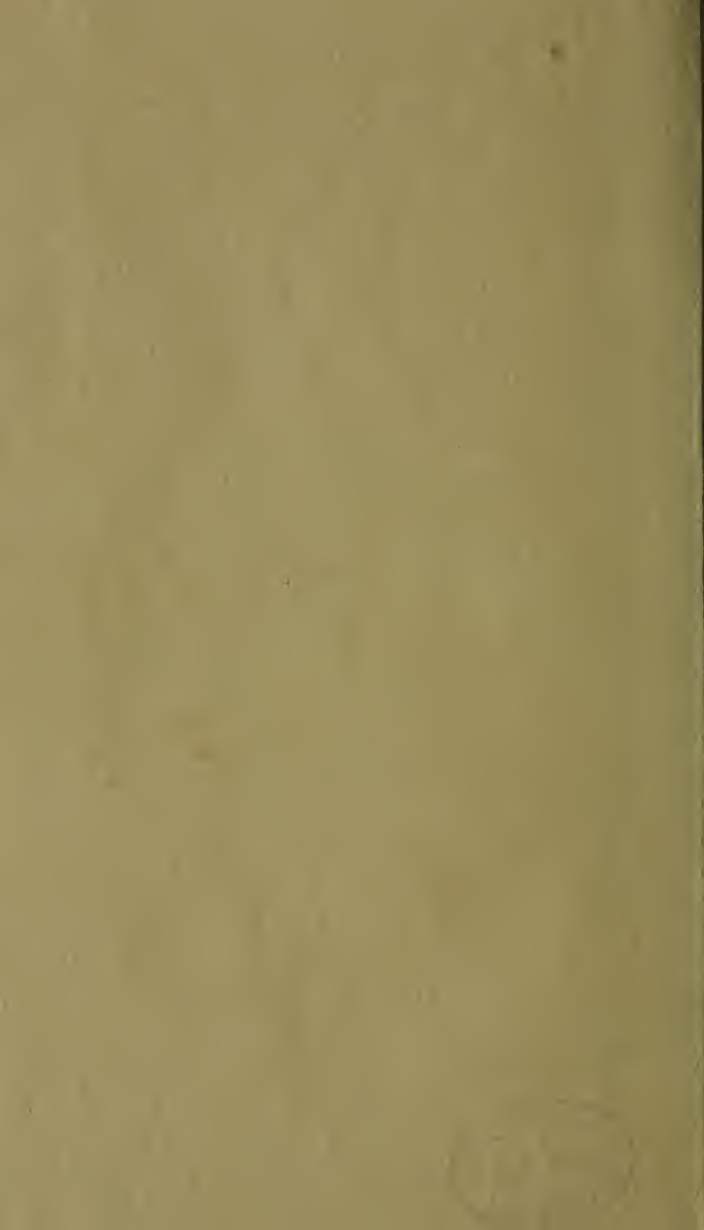
OF US

1. Four Pieces, for pianoforte.
2. Four Songs for Contralto.
3. Six Poetic Tone-Pictures, for pianoforte.
4. Six Songs.
5. Four Songs.
6. Three Humoresken, for pianoforte.
7. Sonata in E minor, for pianoforte.
8. First Violin Sonata, in F major.
9. Four Songs.
10. Vier Romanzen, for voice and pianoforte.
11. Concert Overture (In Autumn.)
12. Lyrical Pieces for Pianoforte. Book I.
13. Second Violin Sonata, in G major.
14. Two Symphonic Pieces, for pianoforte, 4 hands.
15. Four Songs.
16. Pianoforte Concerto in A minor.
17. Northern Dances.
18. Eight Songs.
19. Sketches of Norwegian Life, for pianoforte.
20. At the Cloister Gate. Scene for soprano and alto solo,
female chorus and orchestra.
21. Four Songs.
22. Two Songs from "Sigurd Jorsalfar" for solo, male chorus
and orchestra.
23. ?
24. Ballade for pianoforte, in G minor.
25. Five Songs.
26. Four Songs.
27. String quartet, in G minor.
28. Four Album Leaves, for pianoforte.
29. Improvisation on two Norwegian Folk-Songs, for piano-
forte.
30. Album of Part Songs for male voice.
31. "Recognition of Land," for baritone solo, male chorus
and orchestra.
32. Alone (Der Einsame), for baritone solo, string orchestra
and two horns.
33. Twelve Songs.

OPUS

34. Two Elegiac Melodies, for string orchestra.
35. Four Norwegian Dances, for pianoforte, 4 hands.
36. Sonata for violoncello and piano, in A minor.
37. Two Valse-Caprices, for pianoforte.
38. Lyrical Pieces, for pianoforte. Book II.
39. Five Songs.
40. "Holberg" Suite, for string orchestra.
41. Six songs transcribed for pianoforte.
42. Bergliot. Poem for declamation, with orchestra.
43. Lyrical Pieces for pianoforte. Book III.
44. Four Sons, from Fjeld and Fjord.
45. Third Violin Sonata, in C minor.
46. Peer Gynt Suite, for orchestra.
47. Lyrical Pieces for pianoforte. Book IV.
48. Six songs.
49. Six songs.
50. Olav Trygvason, for solo voices, chorus, and orchestra.
51. Romanze, with variations, for two pianos, 4 hands.
52. Six songs transcribed for pianoforte.
53. Two songs transcribed for string orchestra.
54. Lyrical Pieces for pianoforte. Book V.
55. Peer Gynt Suite (No. 2) for orchestra.
56. Sigurd Jorsalfar. Three pieces for orchestra.
57. Lyric Pieces for pianoforte. Book VI.
58. Five songs.
59. Six songs.
60. Five songs.
61. Seven songs for children.
62. Lyrical Pieces for pianoforte. Book VII.
63. Two Norwegian Melodies for string orchestra.
64. Symphonic Dances, for pianoforte, 4 hands.
65. Lyrical Pieces for pianoforte. Book VIII.
66. Popular Norwegian Melodies.
67. The Mountain Maid (eight songs).
68. Lyrical Pieces for pianoforte. Book IX.
69. Five songs.
70. Five songs.
71. Lyrical Pieces for pianoforte. Book X.
72. Norwegian Peasants' Dances.
73. Stimmungen (Impressions), for pianoforte
Funeral March.

8675 19



927.81 G87

MUSIC



3 5002 00394 6634

Finck, Henry Theophilus
Edvard Grieg,

ML 410 .G9 F4 1906

Finck, Henry Theophilus,
1854-1926.

Edvard Grieg

